

BENGAL UNDER AKBAR AND AURANGZEB:
**A STUDY OF THE IMPACT OF MUGHAL *FARMANS* AND OTHER
IMPERIAL ORDERS ON RELIGION AND CULTURE OF BENGAL**



Thesis submitted to Visva-Bharati
(A Central University)

For the Award of the
Doctor of Philosophy
In
History

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Dedicated to
My
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This is to certify that this thesis entitled **Bengal under Akbar and Aurangzeb: A Study of the Impact of Mughal *Farmans* and other Imperial Orders on Religion and Culture of Bengal**, submitted by Smt. Annapurna Das in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the award of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, is a bonafide research work carried out under my supervision. This work has not been submitted partially or fully for any other degree of this or any other university. I recommend that this thesis be placed before examiners for evaluation.


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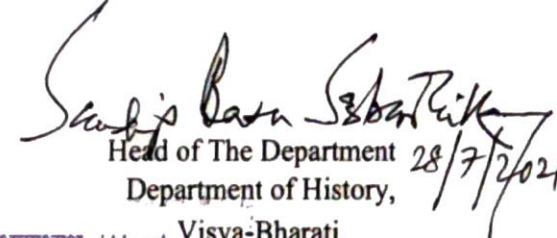
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DECLARATION

I declare that the thesis entitled **Bengal under Akbar and Aurangzeb: A Study of the Impact of Mughal *Farmans* and other Imperial Orders on Religion and Culture of Bengal** has been prepared by me under the guidance of Dr. Amarendra Kumar, Associate Professor, Department of History, Visva-Bharati. No part of this thesis has formed the basis for the award of any degree or fellowship previously.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

First of all I thank to God, whose mercy and graciousness enabled me to carry out the work and face numerous handicaps and difficulties.

As my works gets ready for submission, I recall the assistance and encouragement received from many people. I would like hereto put on record humbly and with gratefulness necessary help and inspiration which they gave at different stages during the course of work.

*I wish to express my deep gratitude to my supervisor, **Dr. Amarendra Kumar**, for his guidance and comments and invaluable suggestions, stimulating discussions all of which made the completion of this research work possible.*

*I am truly indebted to **Professor N. A. Khan** (Professor of Persian Department, Visva-Bharati) who taught me Persian language which helped me to grasp the primary sources for the research work.*

*I am very thankful to **Sir Moied Khan** (In charge of Mughal Records Department, Hyderabad State Archives), who provided reproduction of some of document from his collections to enrich my thesis.*

I am also thankful to all of my teachers, my friends in the Department of History, Visva-Bharati, for all their emotional and moral support and encouragement which I received during this period.

My thanks are also due to staffs of Central Library of Visva-Bharati, Kolkata National Library, Mysore Library. They encouraged me and made it possible to complete the thesis work smoothly.

No words can express my sincere thanks to my beloved Maa and Baba, my father in-law; and my friend and husband Rajdeep Sinha for his moral support, warm love, and constant efforts to shield me from household responsibilities. Also thanks to my little son Dripto for his stress bursting mischievous pranks and love which always lifted my moral during the difficult times.

Annapurna Das

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CHAPTER-I

Introduction

Prologue

Law and order is the mainstay of the administration of any nation. Every nation arranges for its administration in consonance with the tradition and praxis prevailing over there. For example, during the pre-modern period, in the Hindu populated countries, the tract of the *Dharmasastras* formed the basis of administration, whereas, in Muslim Chanceries, it was in accordance with the *Shariat* law. Exceptions, however, did exist at different points of time, like that of the Mughal rule in India. Compared to the other states of the time where non-Muslim population formed significant minority, the Mughal state comprised of predominantly non-Muslim people who were allowed to follow their own rules and regulations based on the imperial prerogatives (mostly liberal spell of rule)- “the Great Mogul is so absolute, that there being no written Laws, his will in all things is a Law, and the last decision of all Causes, both Civil and Criminal.” “For the better management of public affairs, and due Administration of Justice, the King keep four Secretaries of State, who are to acquaint him with all that happens in the Empire, and to receive his Orders.”¹

The modern scholarship of historians like Irfan Habib, Muzaffar Alam, Anjali Chatterjee, Meenakshi Khanna etc. have viewed the Mughal state not essentially as a theocratic state. The fact remains that the Mughal Emperor Akbar arranged for the leading Ulamas and Imperial Qazi to sign a declaration (*mahzar*) which acknowledged that in a situation where a religious scholars failed to agree among themselves, the Emperor’s opinion would be binding.² His *farmans* created a corpus of judicial law, his orders created new sets of right.³ It means Mughal court stood at

the apex of social and cultural relationships.⁴ Quite, in contrast, on the other hand, the main ambition of Aurangzeb appears to be to convert the Mughal state into an Islamic institution, “free to fulfill his Islamic visions of the Mughal Empire, (which) was his ultimate goal.”⁵ So, based on the two different set of orders, we justify and paint a new picture of administration in most of the provinces (*subas*) under the Mughal dominions. The Mughal *suba* of Bengal was no exception to this experience. The religious and cultural history of Bengal was tremendously influenced by the Mughal law and orders, though the early history of the spread of Islam in Bengal is still shrouded in myth and mystery due to the intricate nature of its history, complexities of its social evolution and the diversities of its religious traditions and popular beliefs. Bengal underwent marked changes in its socio-religious and cultural life in which the Muslims, mainly under the Mughal influence, played a prominent role. A perusal of some of the imperial *farmans* issued by Akbar, for example, suggest that he favored the continuation of the liberal religious customs in the *subah* of Bengal. It has been variously argued that Akbar actually started ruling as a ‘national monarch’, as got himself thoroughly ‘Indianized’.⁶ His son and successor, Jahangir, at best, continued with the practices of his father. He issued an order in 1611 A.D. to all the provincial governors that there must not be any forcible religious conversions in their respective areas. Later on, despite his personal preferences, Shahjahan did not try to unnecessarily disturb the equations in Bengal. However, this trend, somehow, was reversed because of the Islamic injunctions of Aurangzeb applied from the core to the periphery alike.

This research work is an attempt to study and analyze various Mughal royal orders, particularly those issued during the reigns of Akbar and Aurangzeb. Attempt, in particular, has been made to laboriously examine the immediate as well as far-reaching

consequences of such orders in context of the socio-religious set-up of the Bengal province through this research-work. By studying the impact of such orders on the contemporary administrative, religious and cultural life of Bengal, this study tends to identify some new trends and also highlight the broader assimilative aspects of this interaction.

Review of Literature

We have inherited the historiography of Mughal Bengal which have been primarily concerned with political and economic life of Bengal under the Mughals, their political affairs, conquests and defeats, and so on. Tapan Roychaudhuri's work *Bengal under Akbar and Jahangir* (1966), deals with the political history of Bengal under these two rulers; the coming of the Europeans in Bengal and their impact on society, economy and culture etc. In the chapter titled "Modes of Life", though Roychaudhuri emphasizes upon the traditional way of Hindu-Muslim life (both rich and poor), but this book has very little to offer on the impact of Mughal tradition in their way of life and how far Bengali people (both Hindu and Muslim) assimilate it. Jadunath Sarkar, in his book *The History of Bengal: Muslim period 1200AD-1757A.D.* (1948), analyses the political history of Bengal under the Mughals, but makes little serious attempt to establish the impact of political authority on the contemporary social-religious-cultural life of Bengal. On the other hand, Atul Chandra Roy's book *History of Bengal: Mughal period 1526-1765 A.D.* (1968), was designed to present a comprehensive survey of the history of Bengal from the earliest time till the downfall of the Mughals. Anjali Chatterjee, in her book *Bengal in the Reign of Aurangzeb (1658-1707 A.D.)*, (1967), describes the political and economic condition in Bengal under the Mughals, the advent of various European companies and establishment of their trade relation with Bengal. Chatterjee, in a chapter,

highlights the social division and emergence of *zamindars* including the traditional Brahmans, *vaidyas* in Bengal. She also highlights the emergence and development of Christianity in different parts of Bengal in her monograph. Though, socio-cultural and economic history of Bengal falls within the author's preview, but it remains largely subordinated to a general survey of political events. On the other hand, the scope of Ramesh Chandra Majumdar's seminal work *History of the Medieval Bengal* is too vast. Though he devoted one chapter to discuss the religious customs and the emergence of different cults in Bengal during the medieval period, the religious and cultural specificities of Bengal under Akbar and Aurangzeb remains largely untouched. S. R. Sharma, in his book *The Religious policy of the Mughal Emperors* (1940) and Makhanlal Roychoudhury, in *The Din-i-Ilahi or The Religion of Akbar* (1997), respectively highlight the specificities of the religious policy followed by Akbar and other Mughal rulers, but do not discuss the reach of religious policy/authority in the conquered territories of the Mughals. In contrast, *The Rise of Islam and the Bengal Frontier 1204-1760* (1993), of Richard M. Eaton has dealt with the subject of the 'Islamization' of Bengal under the Mughals by way of the imposition of their 'different' political culture, agrarian customs, establishment of religious structures and institutions etc. The available literature, in addition, also identifies the administrative measures and several laws adopted by the Mughals. For example, Ibn Hasan's *The Central Structure of the Mughal Empire* (1970), and Irfan Habib's edited volume, *Akbar and his India* (1998), make extensive references to the contemporary documents to argue their respective points. At the same time, Jadunath Sarkar's *Mughal Administration* (1935), Satya Prakash Sangar's 'Crime and Punishment in Mughal India' (1967), etc. make a mention some of the Mughal laws all over India, but not particularly for any specific Mughal *suba*.

It is interesting to note that the Mughals, in their documentary evidences, particularly concerning the drafting or issuance of royal orders, did not follow a uniform pattern. This has been highlighted by Ibn Hasan in his work *The Central structure of the Mughal Empire*. Hasan describes in details the procedure followed by the Mughals while drafting any *farman*. Irfan Habib also points out the salient features of Mughal *farmans* specially those issued during the reign of Akbar. However, more technical issues and features, viz., the division and sub-division of the Mughal documents and the significant changes which were adopted in course of time from the reign of Akbar and Aurangzeb, have been largely ignored in the scholarly works. This research work addresses those issues in their context.

Research Questions

The political history of Bengal has been well documented in scholarly works. However, the emergence of a religio-cultural system in Bengal under the Mughal rule, as a subject of serious study, based upon original documentary evidences, has not been well explored by the scholars. This is a task of admitted difficulty, partly because so many of the records have perished in the course of time. The most pertinent area of inquiry relates to the orders issued by Mughal Emperors (mainly Akbar and Aurangzeb) to control the administration and socio-religious and cultural life of Bengal. In order to fully examine and explore this aspect of Bengal's history, this research-work has mostly addressed the following questions:

1. How far did the Mughal orders succeed to assimilate with the trends of Bengal?
2. What were the changes in pre-Mughal and Mughal Bengali culture?
3. The Mughal Government was known as *Kaghazi raj* (paper based Government), because its officers had to maintain many books/ledgers,

containing copies of correspondence, descriptive rolls, news-letters and dispatches received etc. So, what was the special feature of documentary system of the Mughal Empire which differentiated it from other Muslim Chanceries?

4. What was the impact of Mughal tradition on the documentary system of Bengal?

Justification of Research

The existing literature and historiography dealing with the political and cultural history of Bengal though deals with the religious customs and the emergence of different cults in Bengal during the Medieval period, it does not undertake a critical analysis of the documented evidences of the Mughal rule in Bengal which facilitated in the emergence of religious, social or cultural traditions which emerged during this period. In other words, though the process of the spread of Islam in Bengal has been highlighted, the documentary evidences, particularly coming from the Mughal period, have not been taken into consideration in the scholarly volumes. Hence, a gap in the existing knowledge about Bengal exists, which can be addressed through a comprehensive study of the contemporary Mughal documents pertaining to administrative, religious and cultural life of Bengal. It is with the help of such evidences that the legacy of Mughal religious and cultural influence in Bengal can be traced in an appropriate manner. The proposed research work is an attempt to address the lacunae in the existing knowledge and enrich the historiography of Bengal under the Mughal rule.

Hypothesis

This research has undertaken the following critical hypothesis and projections which have been philosophically and empirically examined in this research.

1. The very appearance and nature of the Mughal state in India started changing and it drifted away from the generally accepted perceptions of a medieval Islamic state governed in conformity with the religious ideals. It implied something quite different than merely a *Shariat* based order.
2. The religious orders and somehow liberal laws serve as one of the primary sources for understanding the early spread and popularity of Mughal tradition in Bengal as they shed new light on the religious and cultural dynamics of a crucial period of Bengal history.
3. There have some different rules followed by the Mughals and the Hindu rulers of Bengal as far as the dissemination of royal orders is concerned. For example, while drafting any official letters, the name of the Mughal Emperor was written at the top of the sheet as a mark of the honour, but the orders of the Hindu rulers started with the name of a God or Goddess.⁷ But there are some examples, which indicate towards the basic influence of Mughal tradition in official documents of Bengal.

Objectives

The main objectives of this research-work can be broadly identified as:

1. To study such royal orders and *Farmans* which were issued by Akbar and Aurangzeb respectively in the context of socio-religious and cultural set-up of the Bengal *suba*.

2. To identify and examine the features, division and sub-division of the Mughal documents and highlight some of the changes, which could be noticed during the reign of Akbar and Aurangzeb.
3. To highlight the basic influence of Mughal tradition in official documents of Bengal.
4. To study the impact of Mughal orders on the contemporary administrative, religious and cultural life of Bengal.
5. To trace the assimilation process of Mughal tradition (through general orders and *farmans*) on Bengali culture which gave rise to a new trend in Mughal Bengal and the later Bengal.

Methodology

The Mughals, under Akbar and his immediate successors, tried to grip the somewhat conservative traditions of Bengal. The *Akbarnama* and the *Ain-i-Akbari* of Abul Fazl are among the most important repositories of information on nearly all aspects of Mughal rule under Akbar. While the *Akbarnama* records the divine theory of Akbar's kingship, which visualized him as the actual king to the people of all communities, the *Ain-i-Akbari*, 'the first gazetteer of India' provides information regarding various regulations and *farmans* issued by Akbar for controlling the socio-religious and cultural trends of Bengal and other conquered *subas*. Its first volume gives information about the Imperial seal and other features of Mughal royal *farmans*. In the second volume, a detailed description is made regarding the nature of taxes and the methods of their collection and remittance during the time of Akbar.⁸ On the other hand the *Muntakhbu-t-Tawarikh* of Badauni, *Tabaqat-i-Akbari* of Nizamuddin Ahmed, etc. give a vivid account of Mughal orders and elaborates upon the principles

on which the Mughal religious and cultural policies were based upon. The *Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri* of Emperor Jahangir, contains valuable information regarding the orders which were issued against the social evils like the *sati*, and eunuch system etc. that existed in contemporary Bengal. The *Raakat-i-Alamgiri* of Aurangzeb, containing the letters of correspondence of Aurangzeb with his *Subehdars* of the provinces, and *Masir-i-Alamgiri* of Saqi Must'ad Khan, narrating the events and orders of Aurangzeb in his lifetime, have provided us with the first-hand information on the contemporary religious undertones. The *Mirat-i-Ahmadi* of Ali Muhammad Khan contains valuable information of the administrative system of Aurangzeb. An account of the political and cultural trends and its development in pre-Mughal and Mughal Bengal under the Islamic rulers can be found in the *Riyazu-s-Salatin* of Gulam Hussain Salim. In addition, the European sources supplement as well as complement the information on the events of Mughal Bengal. References on certain events like the destruction of temples by Aurangzeb, persecution of Hindus in Bengal, evils of *sati* practice, etc. could also be found in Niccolao Manucci's *Storia Do Mogor or Mogul India*, or of De Graaf. A thorough acquaintance of these primary sources constitutes the first step of the methodology followed in this research-work.

Various other primary documents – published and unpublished, preserved in various archives, have been much helpful to understand the administrative measures taken by the Mughal Emperors in their conquered provinces. In particular, a few documents pertaining to grants and general orders issued by Aurangzeb are located at the Telangana State Archives and Research Institute, Hyderabad. Professor Moied Khan, the supervisor of the Mughal Records Department of the Archives had been generous to introduce me to a list of 47 types of Mughal orders issued by the Mughal Emperors (Mughal Records, Part-I). Similarly, *Selected Documents of Shah Jahan's Reign*,

edited by Yusuf Husain Khan (ex-curator of the Historical Records Section), in 1950, in Hyderabad-Deccan and preserved in the State Archives in Telangana, has been quite useful for this research-work. In addition, Khan's another edited volume titled *Selected Documents of Aurangzeb's Reign (1659-1706 A.D.)*, provides a list of name of documents issued by Aurangzeb and his special Imperial seal *Adam Tabdil* (the seal which cannot be altered). To get a feel of the official language of the Mughals, a certification course in Persian language from the Persian Department of Visva-Bharati had been very helpful. The findings from these primary documents have been analyzed in the light of the secondary literature on Mughal administration and religious policy. Since this research work is to assess the impact of Mughal religious orders on Bengal, a critical evaluation of the Bengali culture and society in the pre-Mughal period has also been done in this research work. So, indirectly, it calls for a rethinking of the ways in which Islamic dominance as well as paternal religious authority of the Mughals was formed and configured at a particular historical conjuncture that presents a totally different historiography of Bengal during Mughal period.

Organization of the Chapters

The thesis contains five chapters, in addition to separate Introduction and Conclusion.

Chapter 1: Mughal *Farmans*: An Idea about its Nature and Significance

Chapter 2: The Mughal State: Religious Practices under Akbar and Aurangzeb

Chapter 3: Pre-Mughal Bengal: Society, Culture and Religious Traditions

Chapter 4: Mughal Bengal: Implications of the Imperial Orders (1556-1707 A.D.)

Chapter 5: The growth of Cultural Synthesis in Bengal: The Mughal Effect

The first chapter, *Mughal Farmans: An Idea about its Nature and Significance*, takes into consideration, the documented materials of the Mughal administration like the *Farman, Nishan, Parwana, Qanun, Hukm, Sanad*, etc. In this chapter, the functional, structural and formal elements of the royal orders along with the Mughal traditions of drafting such orders and their authentication procedures have been discussed.

The second chapter, *The Mughal State: Religious Practices under Akbar and Aurangzeb*, discusses the Mughal social, cultural and religious practices with particular emphasis on the reigns of Akbar and Aurangzeb. This chapter also highlights particular changes in conventional practices, from the time of Akbar onwards.

In the third chapter, *Pre-Mughal Bengal: Society, Culture and Religious Traditions*, a survey of the religious and cultural conditions prevailing in pre Mughal Bengal since ancient period down to the Mughal rule has been undertaken. In particular, the traditions highlighting the interaction between the two major cultures (Hindu and Islamic) in Bengal since the period of the Delhi Sultanate have been discussed.

The fourth chapter, *Mughal Bengal: Implications of the Imperial Orders (1556-1707 A.D.)*, mainly deals with the Mughal royal/administrative orders related to the *suba* of Bengal. In particular, the specific styles of the royal orders sheltered by the Mughal Emperors have been highlighted.

The fifth chapter, *The growth of Cultural Synthesis in Bengal: The Mughal Effect*, explores Bengal as *suba-i-Bangla*, which came through the Mughal Emperor's order. Particular emphasis has been laid upon identifying and delineating the assimilation process in Bengal during the Mughal period.

The thesis ends with the *Conclusion*, which mainly contains a brief summary of the main findings of the research-work. The conclusion is followed by a Select Bibliography at the end.

¹M. De Thevenot and John Francis Cemelli Careri, *Indian Travels of Thevenot and Careri*, ed. Surendranath Sen, New Delhi: The National Archives of India, 1949, p. 240.

² Abul-Qadir Ibn-i-Muluk Shah or Al-Badaoni, *Muntakhbu-T Tawarikh*, trans. George S. A. Ranking, Vol. II, New Delhi: Atlantic Publishers and Distributors, Reprint 1990, pp. 279-80.

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⁵Richards, J. F., *The Mughal Empire*, Cambridge University Press, 1993, p. 172.

⁶Shah, K. T, *The Splendour that was India*, Bombay: D. B. Taraporevala Sons and Co., 1930, p. 30.

⁷Sarkar, Jadunath, *Mughal Administration*, Calcutta: M. C. Sarkar and Sons, 1935, p. 235.

⁸Abul Fazl, *Ain-i-Akbari*, trans. H. S. Jarrett, Vol. II, Calcutta: Asiatic Society of Bengal, 1949, pp. 72-73.

CHAPTER- II

Mughal *Farmans*: An Idea about its Nature and Significance

Right from the ancient period till the present day, there has been a conscious attempt by the ruling authorities towards documentation of rules, regulations and various instructions/orders of political, economic, social or cultural significance. A careful perusal of such documents not only reveals the actual nature of diplomatic relations, but also helps us to form an idea about the public and private lives of the rulers. For example, the early palm-leaf manuscript and Sanskrit or Prakrit copper plate inscriptions of the ancient period as well as the documents and orders issued by the Delhi Sultans or the Mughal Emperors or other regional powers during the medieval period, which have survived the ravages of time and exist both in public and in private collections, have been extremely helpful as the first-hand source materials of the past. Though it may be borne in mind that the science of documentary evidence is quite distinct from epigraphy, however the ultimate object of both of them is one and the same, namely to reduce history. Epigraphy deals primarily with the interpretation of the contents of ancient records and documents taking into account the language, paleography and orthography.¹ On the other hand, in historical as well as contemporary administrative and political usage, all the documentary materials, viz. *nesan*, *hokm*, *qanun*, *parvana*, *farman*, etc. denote a royal or governmental decree, that is a public and legislative document promulgated in the name of the ruler or another person holding partial elements of sovereignty. The epigraphic findings as well as the documentary evidences inscribed on paper expressed and disseminate the authority of the one who was in the power.

During the medieval period, the paper based documentary system may be divided into two sections: (1) *Muhavarat*- referring to private memorandum, and (2) *Tauqiat*-referring to public documents. The former can be further sub-divided into two parts- *Akham*- denoting the royal edicts, and *Amsila*- indication the official rescript.² Interestingly, the documents which we know as *farmans*, came through the replacement of *Akham* during the Mughal period. A *farman* was a written permission (decree, command, judgment) issued by a sovereign of Islamic States including the Ottoman Empire, Mughal Empire, and later on, Hyderabad and Iran under Shah Muhammad Reza Pahlavi etc. In Persian, it is known as *farman*, in Turkish known as *ferman*.³ *Farmans* were gathered in codes called *Kanun* (from the Hellenic word *kanon*), meaning rule or rules, as well as the Arabic word *qanun* (also meaning rule or law).⁴ The *Kanun* were “a form of secular and administrative law considered being a valid extension of religious law as a result of the ruler’s right to exercise legal judgment on behalf of the community”.⁵ In many Islamic countries different terms like *nesan*, *raqam*, *hokm*, *yarlig*, *parvana*, *parvanca* etc. were being used for specific types of royal orders. The nomenclature normally depended and changed with the conventions of the particular dynasty in power. For example, the more well known and important documents of the Mughal period were variously designated as the *farmans*- royal patents or royal orders, *hukms*- generally the orders issued by prime minister or sometime by the queens, *nishans*- letters and orders of the princes or the princesses, *shuggas*- letters from the king, *parwanas*- orders issued by ministers and high officials to their subordinates, *arzdashts*- petitions or addresses from an inferior to a superior, *ruqas*- a kind of small writings usually between persons of equal ranks⁶, *fathnama*- a letter of victory read over to public, *razm* and *ishara*- short notes and points written down by the Emperor in his diary, *kalimat*- official orders, *manshur*-

royal mandate addressed to a privileged person belonging to the royal family, *qaulnama*- written paper of preliminary engagement between the two rulers, *ahadnama*- written paper on concluded treaty between the rulers, etc.⁷

Most of the Mughal documents viz. *farman*, *nishan*, *hukm*, etc. consists of two part- (a) recto and (b) verso. The former part included preamble, notification and conclusion. In this connection, Heribert Busse refers to seven external segments in Persian *farmans*⁸ which were similar to the Mughal *farmans* and other types of Mughal imperial documents. The beginning of the document usually opened with the invocation-the invocation of God (*surnama*). It was a part of preamble. The documents also contained two instruments of validation- *Muhr* or the seal and *Tughra* or the marks of honour.⁹ It also carried the name and title of promulgator as it was a royal mandate or decree commandments. The document then explained the circumstances or the previous history of the document's promulgation. Further, the intention of the ruler behind promulgation of the decree was explained which granted it the actual legal mandate. All these part were included in the notification. The document also contained regulations for the perusal of the recipient, and concluded with a part whose content specified the responsibilities for all those called upon to execute the disposition- also known as *tokid* and *tahnid*.¹⁰ The final segment of the document consisted of the eschatological, i.e., the declaration of the date and sometimes the declaration of the place of the issue. The *tokid- tahnid* and date of declaration part were also included with conclusion.¹¹ However, the applicability of this terminological classification derived from Persian models was not same in some respects. For example, in Timurid practice, the mention of the addressee, i.e., the person to where a letter was addressed, and the beneficiaries were integrated into the obligations part. Under the Safavids the devotional formula was extended by the

invocations, and followed a strict classic pattern, when mention the addressees and the incumbents (beneficiaries) of the documents.¹²

Though the respective terminology of the dating portion in all *farmans* varied from one administrative system to another, certain expressions appeared in all chanceries with more or less frequency. There was a certain formula- *tahariran fi*, which was followed in most of the medieval documents. The dating of early *farman* followed a location, viz., *be-maqam-e-ujan* in a document by Timur, but *tahariran fi* was found in most of the documents from fifteenth century onwards. The word “*fi*” (in) was occasionally replaced by the naming of the day or directly by the month of the lunar *hejri* calendar, with the respective Arabic epithet. To this followed the word *sanna* (year) which was written in words until the 16th century, after which it was predominantly written in digits.¹³ Even in Mughal India a wide variety of practices were followed by different reigning monarchs. Babur and Humayun, for example, totally followed Lunar *hejri* calendar, but Akbar registered solar cycle which was a Turkish duodenary and calculated it from the year on 11th March 1556 A.D. This practice continued till the reign of Shah Jahan. The solar month was used by Aurangzeb only in the revenue registers.¹⁴ Actually, the functional, structural and formal elements of the decrees under the Islamic chanceries were described as *farmans* for the first time from the Ottoman Empire. In the Ottoman Empire, the sultan derived his authority from his role as upholder of the *sharia*, but the *sharia* did not cover all aspects of Ottoman social and political life. Therefore, in order to regulate relations and status, duties and dress of aristocracy and subjects, the sultan created *firman*. Even under the Ottoman Empire, the importance of a *firman* was often displayed by the layout of the document – the more blank space at the top of the

document, the more important the *firman* was.¹⁵ Later on, this procedure spread all across the Islamic world.

In India, the early terminological classifications of Islamic *farmans* have survived from the chanceries of the Sultanate and Mughal Empire, which were invariably composed in Persian language.¹⁶ The rulers of the Bahmani dynasty of the 15th century issued *farmans* in the pre-Mongol style, that is, in the traditions of the Abbasid and Saljuq chanceries, which is particularly evident in the old beautiful, old fashioned *togra* style.¹⁷ The main characteristic of this style was that it mentioned the full name and signature of the ruler, which showed its authentication. Only large ‘B’ was written on the long characters of writing.¹⁸ The principalities of the Deccan Sultanate followed the Safavids model – especially true for the *farmans* of the Qutubshahi rulers of Golkonda.¹⁹ Whenever an Imperial Prince issued a document during his father’s lifetime, it contained his name and there were two *tughras* instead of one at the top of the document. The upper one declared the document to be the *farman* of the Emperor with his official name and titles, while the lower denoted that it was the exalted *nishan* of the Prince named therein.²⁰ So, an official document, a writ, order, or directive, was known in Islamic administrative system as *Farman*. It was an imperial directive issued on different subjects: political, social, administrative or economical. *Farman* was also the most widely used as a form of writ under Mughal rulers. The Ottoman Turkish, Safavids and Mongols etc. brought along various procedures and processes involved in the process of drafting of the *farmans*. The Mughals, though followed the traditions of their predecessors, but had their own characteristic and independent design on them. Such independent Mughal features could be noticed in all types of their imperial orders (viz. pertaining to religious, judicial, social and economic orders etc.) including the *farmans*. Under the Mughals,

all the documents were composed in Persian, because it was their official language. The script used was mainly *Shikasta*.²¹ This cursive script is actually a variation of *Nasta'liq* script (invented by Akbar) which was used on a large scale during the reign of Jahangir by Mirza Muhammad Husain.²² From the reign of Humayun, there was an expansion of the Persian language in India, because many Iranians related with him on his journey from Iran (defeat by Afghans).²³ Akbar was the first among the Indo-Islamic rulers of northern India to have formally introduced Persian as the language of administration at all levels. The proclamation to this effect was issued by his famous Khatri Hindu revenue minister, Todar Mal, accompanied by reorganization of the revenue and the other administrative offices by the equally famous Iranian noble, Mir Fathullah Shirazi.²⁴ However, an eighteenth-century historian, Ghulam Husain Tabataba'i recorded that this changeover was significant in the sense that earlier the government accounts were written in Hindi. Then, Raja Todar Mal acquired new regulations (*zawabit*) from the clerks (*nawisindagan*) of Iran, and the government offices then were reorganized as they were there in *Wilayat*.²⁵ After that, Akbar emphasised the curricula and scope of the Persian studies- its alphabets, basic words, grammar etc.²⁶ According to Abul Fazl, Akbar composed verses in Persian and Hindi. Even the Emperor planted glorious thoughts in Hindi language.²⁷ Later on, "All Mughal Government papers- from the imperial orders (*farmans*) to bonds and acceptance letters (*muchalka*, *tamassuk qabaliyat*)- that a village intermediary (*chaudhuri*) wrote were prepared in Persian."²⁸ There were two categories of letters in this regard. In the first instance, there was the *arzdast*, which would be addressed to the Emperor Akbar; and the other, a *dastar-ul-amal*, which was meant to be a manual for the officials. Abul Fazl, the premier ideologue and the *mirmunshr* of the Mughal Empire, had suggested *Akhlaq-i Nasir*, *Kimyd-i Sa'adat*, *Masnawr* of Maulana Jalal-

ud-Din Rami, as essential readings. This way, Persian developed as the language of rulers, royal household and high Mughal prime. Jahangir wrote letters and several verses of *Gazal* in Persian in his own style. The institution of *malik-ush-shu'ara* got the supreme status of Persian under the patronage of Aurangzeb.²⁹

Most of the *farmans* required royal seal, whereas only a few did not. For example, the matters related to the daily routine of the Emperor, his movements and sayings in the *darbar*, did not require any seal. Nonetheless, an extensive procedure was always followed for drafting of even these unimportant cases as royal orders or *farmans*. The procedure, usually followed in such cases, was as follows. Whatever the king said or did, and whatever the officers of the state brought to his notice, was recorded in a diary by the two *waqianawis* (*waqia* means an event, *nawis*-a writer). It is said that the Emperor has appointed a total of fourteen experienced and imperial clerks, two of whom performed the daily duty in rotation in such a manner that the turn of each one came after a fortnight. Here, the other suitable men were selected as *kotal* or supernumeraries, each of whom was appointed for one day; and any of the fourteen be detained for an important business, this additional person acts for him. After inspection, the diary by officers concerned like high ranking *amirs* (present in the *darbar*), *parvanchi* (the writer of *parvanchas*), *mirarz* (officer in charge of petitions), was finally approved by the emperor. The duty of these clerks was to prepare a separate copy of each order and put his signature. This royal order came to be known as '*yaddasht*' or memorandum.³⁰ The *yaddasht* were of various types –

	Name of the Document	English Equivalent
1	<i>Yaddasht</i>	Memorandum
2	<i>Yaddasht-i-Ahkan</i>	Memorandum containing imperial orders
3	<i>Yaddasht-i-Asl-o-Izafa</i>	Memorandum of original pay and enhancement
4	<i>Yaddasht-i-Barawurd</i>	Memorandum of pay bill
5	<i>Yaddasht-i-Daghnama</i>	Memorandum of branding
6	<i>Yaddasht-i-Fihrist-i-Zamini</i>	Memorandum containing a list of the persons who stood surety
7	<i>Yaddasht-i-Hasil-i-Jagir</i>	Memorandum of revenue of Jagir
8	<i>Yaddasht-i-Hal Hasil</i>	Memorandum of revenue
9	<i>Yaddasht-i-Haqiqat</i>	Memorandum of facts
10	<i>Yaddasht-i-Haziri</i>	Memorandum of attendance
11	<i>YaddashtMaujudat-i-Aspan</i>	Memorandum showing the strength of horses
12	<i>Yaddasht-i-Mutalaba</i>	Memorandum of demands
13	<i>Yaddasht-i-Silah</i>	Memorandum of armours
14	<i>Yaddasht-i-Silahnama</i>	Memorandum of armours
15	<i>Yaddasht-i-Tasdiq-i-Haziri</i>	Memorandum of attendance
16	<i>Yaddasht-i-Tashiha</i>	Memorandum of verification
17	<i>Yaddasht-i-Tashiha-i-Aspan</i>	Memorandum of verification of horses
18	<i>Yaddasht-i-Tashiha-i-Silah</i>	Memorandum of verification of the armours
19	<i>Yaddasht-i-Tashiha-o-Dagh</i>	Memorandum of verification and branding
20	<i>Yaddasht-i-Wusul</i>	Memorandum of receipt

Source: Mughal Records (Part I), Andhra Pradesh State Archives and Research Institute, p. 10.

After the *yaddasht* was prepared it was received by a big staff of copyists who kept it with them and prepared a good summary or gist of each order in a lucid style. This came to be known as as '*ta'liqa*'. The person, who prepared the *ta'liqa*, was known as the *taliqa-nawis*. Subsequently it was signed by the *waqia-navis*, *risalahdar* (noble on duty in the *darbar*), *mir-arz*, *darogha* (superintendent of the *darbar*). The '*ta'liqa*' was sealed by the ministers or the prince on duty in the *darbar*.³¹ The different types of '*ta'liqa*' (viz., prepared for order of appointments to *jagirs*) were retained by the *Bakhshi* and a certificate, called *Sarkhat* (specifying the amount of the monthly salary) was issued accordingly. The *Diwan*, in turn, kept the *Sarkhat* with himself,

prepared an account of the annual and monthly salary due on it, and reported the matter to the emperor. Once the order was confirmed by the Emperor, the word *Ta'liqa-yitanqalaminumayand* was entered on the top of the report and it was drafted as a *farman*.³²

During the Mughals period, we come across many type of orders issued with particular royal seal and marks of honour. Mention may be made of two kinds of royal orders belonging in this particular – the *farman-i-sabti* and the *farman-i-bayazi*. Orders regarding the appointments to the *Vakilship*, conferment of *Mansab*, appointment to the post of Governor *Bakhshi*, grant of *jagirs* with or without military service, or conferring of *sayurghals* (grants of land for charitable purpose), fell under the former category.³³ According to Abul Fazl, certain important orders which could not be placed in the hands of all, and which did not admit delay, fell in the category of *farman-i-bayazi*. These orders, nonetheless, required the royal seal. The *farmans* were carried by *mansabdars* or even the *ahadis* (common foot soldiers).³⁴ Some other variations of *farmans* were *Farman-i-siyasi*- dealing with political affairs, *Farman-i-mulki-wa-mali*- dealing with administrative matters, and *Farman-i-ilami*- dealing with public ordinances.³⁵ The other orders, which did not receive royal seal were-³⁶

- a) Stipulated salary of the *begums* and princes; monthly salaries of *ahadis* and employees of the royal *karkhanas* etc.
- b) The treasurer did not demand a new *sanad* every year, but paid the salaries and allowances on the receipt signed and sealed by the ministers of the state.
- c) Sale and purchase receipts.
- d) Prince lists.
- e) Specifying the revenue collections of the collectors on account of the *ryots*, known as '*Qararnama*' orders.

Some other Mughal orders were drafted in such a manner that the first two lines were written very briefly. They did not require royal seal either. They were known as '*parvanchas*', and its writer was called '*Parvanchi*'. The *Tughra* character was used in such orders.³⁷ The *Parvanchas* were sub-divided into four categories- (i) *Asad-i-ahkomidiwani*- to verify royal orders; (ii) *Hasbul hukms*- a ministerial rescript conveying royal order; (iii) *Hasbulhmrs*- a counter orders of the ministers, which were issued by subordinate officials, and (iv) *Kaghazat-i-defteri* dealt with departmental transactions and routine business.³⁸

The *Ain-i-Akbari* informs us that the Mughals used many types of seal for different purposes. They were (a) A round one, known by the Chaghtai name of *uzuk*, used for *farman-i-sabti*. Later on, Mawlana Ali Ahmad of Delhi improved it. (b) A large one, over which the name of the emperor and those of his ancestors up to Timur was engraved. At first, it was used only for letters to the foreign rulers, but later on, it was used for all purposes. (c) A square seal engraved with the words *Allah Akbar JallJalalahu*. (d) Mawlana Maqsum made a seal, *mihrahi* in form, containing the name of Akbar only. He engraved the word- *Rastimujib-iriza-yikhudastkasnadidamki gum shudaz rah-irast* (meaning- 'Uprightness is the means of pleasing God; I never saw anyone lost on the straight road'). This was used for judicial transactions.³⁹ (e) A seal named *Adam Tabdil* which cannot be altered, usually placed at the top of the pater and served as a safeguard against forgery and mal-practice during the reign of Aurangzeb.⁴⁰ (f) A separate seal was used for all matters connected with the female department.⁴¹ Father Monserrate noted that during the reign of Akbar, Khvaja Jahan was in charge of the *muhr-i-muqaddas-i-kalan* (the great royal seal), and the small signet ring (*uzuk*) was in charge of one of the Emperor's queens. The seal was fastened eight days after the receipt of the draft of the minister. "During these eight

days's interval every document is most carefully examined by the confidential counsellor and by the king himself, in order to prevent error and fraud.”⁴² During the reign of Shah Jahan, after the death of Mumtaz Mahal, the seal was given to Begum Saheb (the emperor's daughter Jahanara).⁴³ In some exceptional cases, reliable nobles maintained the seal. For example, the father of Mumtaz Mahal was given the responsibility as he held the post of prime minister at that time.⁴⁴ Few other significant features of the Imperial seal of the Mughals may be enumerated as follows. In Akbar's lineal (genealogical) seal, the number of outer circles is seven, which was increased by one in the seals under each of his successors. Hence, those of Aurangzeb and of Murad Bakhsh as “Badshah Ghazi” contain ten outer circles, reading thus- *ibn Shah Jahan Shah*, *ibn Jahangir Badshah*, *ibn Akbar Badshah*, *ibn Humayun Badshah*, *ibn Babur Badshah*, *ibn Umar Saikh Shah*, *ibn Sultan Abu Said Shah*, *ibn Sultan Muhammad Shah*, *ibn Miran Shah*, and *ibn Amir Timur Sahib-i-Qiran*.⁴⁵

Another written authority for holding either office or land was known as *Sanads*. According to Abul Fazl, every statement of accounts is called as *Sanads*. It is a voucher that relieves the treasurer of all responsibilities, and on which people receive payment of their claims. In addition, some experienced officers used to write the agreement upon loose pages and leaves, which were also known as *Daftar*. Several *Daftars* have been referred by Abul Fazl, viz. the *Abwab-i-mal* or entries referring to the revenue of the country; the *Arbab-t-tahawil* which contained the debits and credits entered on account; the *Tawjih* or entries referring to the pay of the army, etc. Some *Sanads* are first signed and sealed by the ministers of the State and are afterwards laid before the Emperor for signature, some are only signed and sealed by the grandees of the court.⁴⁶ The *farmans* which were issued for financial grants, were called ‘*Barats*’ (cheque).⁴⁷ The *Akhbar Navis system* (new gathering system) organized by Akbar set

off the nascent form of the newspaper. The *waqai* submitted by the *wagainavis* (official news reporters/ news writers) were in fact, periodical summaries of the regular communication. These gradually evolved into periodical newsletters. The era also saw the emergence of the official ante-typographic newspapers, which were indeed the confidential reports and special newsletters devised for instant perusal of the monarch. From this, there emerged the *akhbar*, or private news periodicals. The contents of the *akhbar* were meant for public consumption and discussion. This was very much evident during the reign of Aurangzeb.⁴⁸ This is also a type of Mughal document, which expressed the ruler's prerogatives. Royal ladies like Nur Jahan, Hamida Banu Begum, Mariyam-uz-Zamani and Jahanara used to issue different types of *farmans*, *hukms*, *nishan*, *parwana*, etc. because they held the highest rank in Imperial *harem*.⁴⁹

According to Abul Fazl, the format of the *farmans* under the Mughals was as follows. As a rule, a *farman* was sealed by one of the royal seals according to the nature of the subject, and the seal was put on the top of the *farmansi*. The subject matter was placed below the seal. During the course of evolution during the Mughal period, three marks of distinction were established by- (i) putting the ruler's signature in addition to the official seal; (ii) adding a line or two at the top in his own hand (Shah Jahan wrote the whole *farmans* himself), and (iii) putting the mark of the royal hand in a red liquid (*panja-i-mubarak*) on the *farmans*. Manucci also devotes some space in his account to discuss the proper format of the Mughal *farmans*. He refers to the palm impression of the Emperor (the *panjah*) on the *farmans*.⁵⁰ The *farmans* of the early Mughal Emperors, including Akbar, were simple texts. However, those of the later ones introduced a lot of ornamentation to include lavish, rich borders. The composition too was quite elaborate and had aesthetic value. Not the Emperor's signatures but the

imperial seal imparted to it due to its authority.⁵¹ It has been noticed that the first two lines of the Mughal *farmans* were always concise and that the royal seal and the *tughra* with their almost exact location on its top (the seal being on the right side of the *tughra*) were its inevitable features. Further, the set phraseology and the arrangement of text, the various endorsements on the reverse with the seals of ministers, as also certain signs and symbols should make a *farman* quite distinct from a *nishan* or a *hukm* because a *nishan* or *hukm* too, have their first two lines in an abbreviated form.⁵²

	Name of the Document	English Equivalent
1	<i>Arz-o-Chihra</i>	Descriptive roll.
2	<i>Barawurd</i>	Pay bill
3	<i>Barawurd-i-Mahiyana</i>	Monthly pay bill
4	<i>Daghnama</i>	Branding certificate of the horse
5	<i>Dastak</i>	An order
6	<i>Fautinama</i>	Death certificate of person
7	<i>Fihrist-i-Mulaziman-i-Dargah-KhalaqPanah</i>	List of Government employees
8	<i>Haqiqat</i>	A statement of facts
9	<i>Hazirzamani</i>	Bond for personal appearance
10	<i>Iqrarnama</i>	Agreement of bond
11	<i>Mahzarnama</i>	Public attestation
12	<i>Maratib</i>	Gradation list
13	<i>Maratib-i-Mulaziman</i>	Gradation list of the employees
14	<i>Maratib-i-Mulaziman-i-DargahKhalaqPanah</i>	Gradation list of the government employees
15	<i>Maujudat-i-Aspan-Silah</i>	Document showing the strength horses or armours.
16	<i>Niwishta</i>	A writing, a written note
17	<i>Niwishta-i-Dargahi</i>	Court paper
18	<i>Naqli-Daghnama</i>	copy of branding certificate
19	<i>Naql-i-Dagh-o-Tashiba</i>	Copy of branding and verify certificate
20	<i>Naql-i-Dastak</i>	Copy of an order
21	<i>Naql-i-Fiqra</i>	Copy of a sentence
22	<i>Naql-i-Tamassak</i>	Copy of a bond
23	<i>Naql-i-Yaddasht</i>	Copy of memorandum
24	<i>Parwancha</i>	Order issued by higher authority
25	<i>Qabz-ul-Wasil</i>	Pay bill
26	<i>Roznamcha</i>	Daily diaries relating to subjects like

		verification, branding or attendance etc.
27	<i>Roznamcha-i-Dagh-o-Tashiha</i>	Report of branding
28	<i>RozamchaSahihnama-i-Behlan</i>	Verification report
29	<i>Roznamcha-i-Tashiha-Ahsham</i>	Attendance report
30	<i>Roznamcha-i-tashiha-o-Dagh</i>	Report of branding of Horse
31	<i>Sahihnama-i-Silah</i>	Royal report related to the Emperor only
32	<i>Saqtinama</i>	Death certificate of Horse
33	<i>Siyaha</i>	Report
34	<i>Siyaha-i-Chauki</i>	Report about guard
35	<i>Siyah-i-Huzur</i>	Proceedings of the provincial court
36	<i>Talab-i-Mansab</i>	Claim of mansab
37	<i>Talab-o-Tankhwah</i>	Pay of certificate
38	<i>Tasdiq</i>	certificate
39	<i>Tasdiq-I Asl-o-Izafa</i>	certificate of original pay in enhancement
40	<i>Tasdiq-i-haziri</i>	Attendance certificate
41	<i>Tasdiq-i-Izafa-i-Mansab</i>	Certificate of enhancement in mansab
42	<i>Tasdiq-i-Mahiyana</i>	Certificate of monthly pay
43	<i>Tasdiq-i-Mansab</i>	Certificate of mansab
44	<i>Tasdiq-i-Yaddasht</i>	Certificate of memorandum
45	<i>Tashiha</i>	Verification
46	<i>Taujih</i>	A document containing the entries referring to rozina
47	<i>Tumar</i>	Fiscal paper

Source: Mughal Records (Part-I), Andhra Pradesh State Archives and Research Institute, p. 9.

There had some Mughal document which was specifically available during the reign of Aurangzeb. Such as *Roznamcha Jama-o-Kharch* (daily account of receipt and disbursement), *Tamassukat-e-Hazir-Zamini* (security bond for personal appearance), *Mal Zamini* (surety for the payment of pecuniary obligation), *Tahud-i-Khidmat* (agreement bond in connection with appointment), *Tasdiq-e-Risala* (an attested copy of mandate noted in the records of the commander whose turn it may be in attendance for mounting guard) etc.⁵³

The *farmans* performed functions like disseminating the messages of the ruler to his subjects. It is through the *farmans* that the Mughal Emperors were said to have

controlled the broader empire without their physical presence. In addition the *farman* also expressed the Emperor's authority and privileges. At the same time, it was ensured that adequate safeguard was in place to check fraud in this connection.

Having discussed about the various types of royal orders, let us now try to understand the differences between the nature and procedure followed in the preparation and issuance of the Mughal *farmans*. The medieval rulers across the globe have been seen as absolute as there were no written laws (except for the religious injunctions) to guide or bind them. The Mughals were not exceptions to this rule as they followed their own prerogatives for issuing an ordinance. Akbar, for example, without transgressing the religious laws, decided to seek a path of his own in the matters of administration. The end result was that he issued several liberal *farmans*, removed all impediments that had been placed before the Hindu population and the outer world in the hope that they would be influenced by them, and as a result, accept Islam. Akbar had a restless spirit, and though he lacked formal education, he was always interested in religious and spiritual matters since young age. A perusal of the contemporary sources would suggest that Akbar's reign, in context of his religious ideas, could be arranged into three phases. The different phases, in turn, indicate the degree of accommodation and liberalism in Akbar's policies. Hence, we come across a lot of documents and decrees related exclusively with religious and paternal justification, grants, social welfare etc., instead of purely political decrees. It was similar to the exercise taken by Emperor Asoka, some 1800 years back, when he had issued general orders to all state officials to look after the spiritual development of all his subjects. Through the same order, Asoka also required his officers to show veneration for those who were distinguished by devotion to incomparable God, and pray in the morning and evening and at midnight.⁵⁴ Interestingly, Akbar often used to say in his *farmans*,

“God ought to be worshipped with every kind of veneration.”⁵⁵ Thus, Akbar revived the ancient Hindu ideal and made a conscious effort to bridge the gulf between the ruler and the ruled. Next, the cultural, social, economic and religious uniformity is another prominent feature of the *farmans* of Akbar. He granted large tracts of land as *madad-i-ma'ash* to the temple's belonging to different sects. There is a reference that Akbar's mother Hamida Banu Begum also issued a *farman* in favour of one Gosain Vithal Nath and his descendants in Mathura on 8th October, 1581 A.D.⁵⁶ The provinces of the Empires of Chandra Gupta Maurya and Samudragupta were an ill-cemented mass held together only by the common bond of allegiance to the Emperor. The same could be said about the provinces of the Delhi Sultans like Ala-ud-din-khalji, Muhammad bin Tughlaq and others.

On the other hand, Aurangzeb, claiming the throne as a Champion of Islam, issued *farmans* to recuperate the norms of orthodox Islam, and to fetch the lives and tradition of the people of his Empire into nearer accord with the teaching of the *Quran*. However, it is interesting to note that during the early years of his reign, he exhibited a broad and liberal religious outlook. This is visible from the instances of lavish land grants he had made to different religious institutions and the extension of state patronage to a large number of non-Muslim divines. The Jain saints praise Aurangzeb for the religious freedom enjoyed by them during his period.⁵⁷ The issuance of a *farman* setting aside 300 bighas of land to the temple of Chitrakoot, with the statement that this grant was meant for the purpose of '*puja*' and '*bhog*' of Thakur Balaji, is a clear indication that Aurangzeb was not against the religious practices of his subject belonging to faiths other than Islam. In fact, they enjoyed complete religious freedom.⁵⁸ In addition, a large number of grants were made by Aurangzeb to different *pujaris*, *bairagis*, *jogis* and priests etc. But, the situation changed entirely

during the later phase of Aurangzeb's reign. Aurangzeb is seen posing as the defender of Islam. It is alleged that he intended to establish *Dar-ul-Islam* instead of *Dar-ul-Harb* in India. For doing that, the pre-requisite was to establish Islamic rule in accordance with the tenets of the *Shariat*. At the same time, the Mughal state needed to reach a consensus in accordance with the advice of the learned clerics or *Ulama* for whom the doctrines, rules, principles and directives, as laid down and interpreted in the 7th and 8th century Arabia, Persia and Iraq, were inviolable and unchangeable in all conditions, in all countries, and for all times to come. In this phase, therefore, many of Aurangzeb's *farman* contained orders to demolish Hindu temples. He published through his *farmans* that 'In the religion of the Musalmans, it is improper even to look at a temple'.⁵⁹

The religious regulations issued by Aurangzeb during this period contained the following characteristics. In the first case, Aurangzeb introduced a series of moral and religious rules known as the *zawabit-i-alamgiri*.⁶⁰ In 1659-60, as a result, he discontinued the festival of *Nauroz* on the grounds that it was Zoroastrian practice favoured by the Savafi rulers in Iran. Celebrating *Nauroz* involved a great deal of expenditure and was probably discontinued for economic reasons in view of the prevailing crisis and then justified on religious grounds. He wrote to his son, "In any case, as this day (*Nauroz*) is one of the festivals of the fire worshippers (*ayad-i-majus*)...there must be no repetition of this stupid act (i.e., celebration of the festival)."⁶¹ He merged it with the coronation festival, which was held in the month of *Ramzan*.⁶² A censor of Morals (*Muhtasibs*) were appointed in all provinces to ensure that the lives of the people controlled in accordance with *Sharia*.⁶³ Wine and intoxicants such as *bhang*, were not allowed to be consumed publicly. During the reign of Aurangzeb, "An order was issued by the imperial finance minister, Raja

Raghu Nath, to the provincial *Diwans* all over the empire asking them to see that *bhang* was not cultivated”.⁶⁴ As Manucci noticed, “Not a day passed that on rising in the morning we did not hear the breaking of blows and strokes of the pots and pans in which these beverages are prepared. But seeing that the ministers themselves also drank and loved to get drunk, the rigour of prohibition was lightened by degrees”.⁶⁵ Economic imperative, therefore, seems to be imperative than religious reason.

In the second series of regulations, the performance of instrumental music and *naubat* (the royal heralding ensemble) was discontinued. Musical instrument were broken on a large scale to ensure that the performance of music stopped altogether. Musicians (both Hindu and Muslim) counseled together and tried to assuage the Emperor. “About one thousand of them assembled on a Friday when Aurangzeb was going to the mosque.” But ultimately Emperor's order killed music. However, the nobles did not cease to listen to music and songs in secret.⁶⁶ The third form of regulations was mostly discriminatory in nature. Under these regulations, Aurangzeb embarked upon the policy of temple destruction or their desecration, re-imposition of *jiziyah* (abolished by Akbar in 1564 A.D.).⁶⁷ Whereas, at the beginning of his reign, “It has been decided according to our Canon Law that long standing temples should not be demolished, but no new temple allowed to be built...”,⁶⁸ but, by 1670, his attitude changed and he commanded that the Keshav Rai temple of Mathura be destroyed.⁶⁹ In 1674, he confiscated all the lands held by Hindus as religious grants in Gujarat.⁷⁰ It is mainly with regard to his policy pertaining to temple destruction that Aurangzeb has been termed as a religious bigot. On 20th Nov 1665, Aurangzeb instructed the *Subehdar* of Gujarat that the Hindu festivals of lamps (*Diwali*) and spring carnival (*Holi*) should be celebrated outside the *bazars* and under some restraints of the city of Ahmedabad and its *parganas*.⁷¹ The justification given for the partial ban of *Holi*

celebration was that the Hindus opened their mouths in indecent speech, and kindle the *Holi* bonfire in *chaklas* and *bazars*, throwing into fire the faggot of all people that they can seize through force and theft. It was really a police regulation as regards of *Holi*.⁷² Aurangzeb further put a ban on it because of the destruction of life and property. In the same year he banned the celebration of *Diwali* because people (Hindus) indulged in gambling and drunkenness.⁷³ This should be highlighted with Aurangzeb's order for putting a stop to *Muharram* processions in all the provinces, after a deadly fight flanked by rival processions had taken place at Burhanpur in January, 1669.⁷⁴ Though, the practice of carrying the *Taziya* was never given up completely.⁷⁵ This ban, too, was a police regulation.

It has been argued that some of the ordinances of Aurangzeb were issued with the sole purpose of hitting the Hindus directly as a matter of state policy. The first of among such orders concerns the demolition of Hindu temples that were newly constructed. It should be noted here that even Shah Jahan also issued orders for the demolition of 'newly constructed temples', but his orders seems to have been restricted to the Banaras region only. But Aurangzeb issued the same throughout the his Empire.⁷⁶ He had also inserted the clause that the old temples cannot to be repaired. Like in Orissa, an order was issued that all the idol-house, whether it was made with brick or clay huts, should be pull down as early as possible; and no old temple to be repaired.⁷⁷ Some of the significant temples destroyed during Aurangzeb's reign were the Vishwanath temple of Banaras, the Keshav Rai temple of Mathura and the second temple of Somnath.⁷⁸ When he was the viceroy of Gujarat in 1645 A.D., he had desecrated the recently built temple of Chintaman by Shantidas at Ahmedabad by killing a cow in it and then turned this building into a mosque called *Quwat-ul-Islam* (the Might of Islam). The killing of cows in other temples, too, was deliberate.⁷⁹ The

case of Mathura temple is motivating. The great temple of Matora (Mathura, built by Raja Bir Singh Bundela under the favour of Emperor Jahangir) remains safe before the reign of Aurangzeb. January, 1670 A.D., Aurangzeb issued an order to erect a large mosque in its place that was “Built by Faithful”.⁸⁰ In *Masir-i-Alamgiri*, it was noted the “The idols, large and small set with costly jewels which had been set up in the temple, were brought to Agra and buried under the steps of the mosque of the Begam Sahib, in order to be continually trodden upon. The name of Mathura was changed to Islamabad.”⁸¹

¹Bodel, John, *Epigraphic Evidence: Ancient History from Inscriptions (Approaching the Ancient World)*, Routledge, New York, March 2001, pp.36-39.

²Tirmizi, S. A. I., “Presidential Address: Medieval Indian Diplomats” in *Proceedings of the Indian History Congress*, 43, 1982, p. 213.

³wikipedia.org/wiki/Firman, retrieved on 1 January, 2020.

⁴Lapidus, M. Ira, *A History of Islamic Societies*, Cambridge University Press, 2002, pp. 260-61.

⁵Ibid.

⁶Misra, Rekha, *Women in Mughal India (1526-1748 A.D)*, Allahabad: Munshiram Manoharlal, 1967, pp. 66-67. See also Hasan, Ibn, *The Central Structure of the Mughal Empire*, New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal, 1936, (reprint) May, 1970, pp.92-96.

⁷Tirmizi, S. A. I., “Presidential Address: Medieval Indian Diplomats” in *Proceedings of the Indian History Congress*, p. 214.

⁸Fragner, Bert G., “Farman” in *Encyclopedia Iranica*, 15th December, 1999, www.iranicaonline.org, retrieved on 7th June, 2016.

⁹Tirmizi, S. A. I., “Presidential Address: Medieval Indian Diplomats” in *Proceedings of the Indian History Congress*, pp. 219-220.

¹⁰Ibid, p. 222; *tokid* denotes an emphasis, and *tohnid* indicates peremptoriness of the royal decree.

¹¹Ibid.

¹²Fragner, Bert G., "Farman" in *Encyclopedia Iranica*.

¹³Ibid.

¹⁴Tirmizi, S. A. I., "Presidential Address: Medieval Indian Diplomats" in *Proceedings of the Indian History Congress*, p. 222.

¹⁵Lapidus, *A History of Islamic Societies*, pp.260-61.

¹⁶Fragner, Bert G., "Farman" in *Encyclopedia Iranica*.

¹⁷Hasan, Maulavi Zafar, *Specimens of Calligraphy in the Delhi Museum of Archaeology*, No. 29, Calcutta: Government of India, Central Publication Branch, 1926, p. 18. It is not an independent script, but is the name given to an ornamental writing in which the letters are so interwoven as to assume a decorative shape difficult to read.

¹⁸Fragner, Bert G., "Farman" in *Encyclopedia Iranica*.

¹⁹Ibid.

²⁰Commissariat, Manekshah Sorabshah, *Imperial Mughal Farmans in Gujarat: Being Farmans mainly issued in favour of ShantidasJawahari of Ahmadabad by the Mughal Emperors*, Hazrat Pirmohammed Shah Library and Research Centre, 2011, p. 7.

²¹Habib, Irfan, ed. *Akbar and his India*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1998, p.91.

²²Hasan, *Specimens of Calligraphy in the Delhi Museum of Archaeology*, No. 29, pp. 2-3.

²³Alam, Muzaffar, "The Pursuit of Persian: Language in Mughal Politics" in *Modern Asian Studies*, 32 (2), May, 1998, p. 319.

²⁴Alam, Muzaffar and Sanjay Subrahmanyam, *Writing of Mughal World: Studies on Culture and Politics*, Columbia University Press, 2012, pp. 314-15.

²⁵Ibid, p. 315.

²⁶Mehta, J. L., *Advanced Study in the History of Medieval India*, Vol. III, New Delhi: Sterling Publishers, Reprint 2012, p. 278.

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- ²⁷Abul Fazl, *Akbarnama*, trans. H. Beveridge, Vol. I, Calcutta: Asiatic Society, 1897, p. 520.
- ²⁸Alam, Muzaffar, "The Pursuit of Persian: Language in Mughal Politics" in *Modern Asian Studies*, p.328. Also see, Alam, Muzaffar and Sanjay Subrahmanyam, *Writing the Mughal World: Studies on Culture and Politics*, p. 317. 'Even in Bengal, the administrative papers prepared and issued in the name of the local Hindu intermediaries were in Persian'.
- ²⁹*Ibid*, pp. 325.
- ³⁰*Ain-i-Akbari*, trans. H. Blochmann, Vol. I, Calcutta: Asiatic Society of Bengal, 1872, p. 269.
- ³¹*Ibid*.
- ³²*Ibid*.
- ³³Hasan, *The Central Structure of the Mughal Empire*, p.97.
- ³⁴*Ain-i-Akbari*, tr. H. Blochmann, Vol.I, p.274.
- ³⁵Tirmizi, S. A. I., "Presidential Address: Medieval Indian Diplomatics" in *Proceedings of the Indian History Congress*, p. 213.
- ³⁶Hasan, *The Central Structure of the Mughal Empire*, p.98.
- ³⁷*Ain-i-Akbari*, tr. H. Blochmann, Vol. I, pp. 269-273.
- ³⁸Tirmizi, S. A. I., "Presidential Address: Medieval Indian Diplomatics" in *Proceedings of the Indian History Congress*, p. 215.
- ³⁹*Ain-i-Akbari*, tr. H. Blochmann, Vol.I, pp. 54-55.
- ⁴⁰Yusuf Husain Khan, *Selected Documents of Aurangzeb's Reign (1659-1706 A. D.)*, Hyderabad: Central Records Office, 1958, p. xiv.
- ⁴¹Misra, *Women in Mughal India (1526-1748 A.D)*, p. 68.
- ⁴²Anthony Monserrate, *The Commentary of Father Monserrate, S. J. (On his Journey to the Court of Akbar)*, trans. J. S. Hoyland, annotated by S. N. Banerjee, London: Oxford University Press, 1922, p. 209. See also, Hasan, *The Central Structure of the Mughal Empire*, p. 101.
- ⁴³Misra, *Women in Mughal India (1526-1748 A.D)*, p. 68.
- ⁴⁴*Ibid*.

⁴⁵Commissariat, *Imperial Mughal Farmans in Gujarat: Being Farmans mainly issued in favour of Shantidas Jawahari of Ahmadabad by the Mughal Emperors*, p.7.

⁴⁶*Ain-i-Akbari*, tr. H. Blochmann, Vol. I, p. 270.

⁴⁷*Ibid*, p. 272.

⁴⁸Deogawanka, Sangeeta, *Postal System in Mughal Period: Under the Reign of Akbar* postalhistoryofindia.blogspot.com, retrieved on 4th October 1990. It also consisted of the *Waqai Navis* (News Writers), *Sawani Nigar* (News Reporters cum Intelligence Agent), and *Khufia Navis* (Secret Agents and Writers).

⁴⁹Misra, *Women in Mughal India (1526-1748 A.D)*, p. 67.

⁵⁰Manucci, Niccolao, *Storia Do Mogor or Mogul India, 1653-1708*, trans. William Irvine, Vol. II, London: Royal Asiatic Society, 1907, pp. 388-89. See also, Hasan, *The Central Structure of the Mughal Empire*, p. 103.

⁵¹Habib, ed. *Akbar and his India*, p. 91.

⁵²*Ibid*.

⁵³Yusuf Husain Khan, *Selected Documents of Aurangzeb's Reign (1659-1706 A. D.)*, pp. ix-xi.

⁵⁴Chandra, Satish, *History of Medieval India (Part II- Mughal Period: 1526-1748)*, Delhi: Orient Black Swan, 2007, pp. 122-25.

⁵⁵*Ain-i-Akbari*, trans. H. Blochmann, Vol. I, p. 179.

⁵⁶Jhaveri, Krishnalal Mohanlal, *Imperial Farmans (A.D 1577 to A.D 1805)*, Bombay: The News Printing Press, 1928, *Farman* no. III. Also see, Misra, *Women in Mughal India (1526-1748 A.D)*, p. 67.

⁵⁷Sarkar, Jadunath, *History of Aurangzeb (Northern India, 1658-1681)*, Vol. III, Calcutta: M. C. Sarkar and Sons, 1928, p. 87.

⁵⁸*Ibid*.

⁵⁹*Aurangzeb, as he was according to Mughal Records*, www.factmuseum.com, retrieved on 8th November, 2016.

⁶⁰Chandra, Satish, *Historiography, Religion and State in Medieval India*, Delhi: Har- Anand Publications Pvt Ltd, 1996, p. 39. See also, Sarkar, *History of Aurangzeb (Northern India, 1658-1681)*, Vol. III, p. 80. *Zawabit* was the secular law, contradistinction from the Holy law or *Shariat*. Here, the important abstract of such law, the *Zawabit-i-Alamgiri*, composed by the most orthodox Muslim ruler Aurangzeb.

⁶¹Blake, Stephen P, *Time in Early Modern Islam: Calender, Ceremony, and Chronology in the Safavid, Mughal, and Ottoman Empire*, Cambridge University Press, 2013, p. 91.

⁶²Jahan, Ishrat, *Socio-Cultural Life in Medieval History*, Solapur, Maharastra: Laxmi Book Publication, 2018, p. 119.

⁶³Sarkar, *History of Aurangzeb (Northern India, 1658-1681)*, Vol. III, p.82.

⁶⁴Sharma, Sri Ram, *The Religious Policy of the Mughal Emperors*, Bombay: Asia Publishing House, 1940, p. 131.

⁶⁵*Storia-Do-Mogor or Mogul India (1653-1708)*, tr. William Irvine, Vol. II, pp. 5-7.

⁶⁶*Ibid*, p.8.

⁶⁷Mehta, J. L, *Advanced Study in the History of Medieval India (Mughal Empire:1526-1707)*, Vol. II, New Delhi: Sterling Publishers, Reprint 2014, pp. 494-95.

⁶⁸Sarkar, *History of Aurangzeb (Northern India, 1658-1681)*, Vol. III, p. 281. Aurangzeb's "Benaras *farman*" addressed to Abdul Hasan, dated 28th February, 1659.

⁶⁹*Ibid*, p. 266. Also see www.google.co.in, retrieved on 18th Aug, 1997.

⁷⁰Sarkar, *History of Aurangzeb (Northern India, 1658-1681)*, Vol. III, p. 284.

⁷¹*Ibid*, p. 279.

⁷²*Introduction to religion and Culture in Mughal India*, www.kkhsou.in, retrieved on 2011.

⁷³Blake, *Time in Early Modern Islam: Calender, Ceremony, and Chronology in the Safavid, Mughal, and Ottoman Empire*, p. 89.

⁷⁴*Storia-Do-Mogor or Mogul India (1653-1708)*, tr. William Irvine, Vol. II, p. 154. See also Blake, *Time in Early Modern Islam: Calender, Ceremony, and Chronology in the Safavid, Mughal, and Ottoman Empire*, p. 86.

⁷⁵Jahan, *Socio-Cultural Life in Medieval History*, p. 118.

⁷⁶*Introduction to religion and Culture in Mughal India*, www.kkhsou.in, retrieved on 2011.

⁷⁷Sarkar, *History of Aurangzeb (Northern India, 1658-1681)*, Vol. III, p. 283.

⁷⁸*Ibid*, pp. 265-66.

⁷⁹Commissariat, *Imperial Mughal Farmans in Gujarat: Being Farmans mainly issued in favour of Shantidas Jawahari of Ahmadabad by the Mughal Emperors*, p. 13.

⁸⁰*Storia-Do-Mogor or Mogul India (1653-1708)*, trans. William Irvine, Vol. II, p.154. Also see, Sarkar, *History of Aurangzeb (Northern India, 1658-1681)*, Vol. III, p. 282.

⁸¹Saqi Must 'ad Khan, *Maasir-i- 'Alamgiri (A History of the Emperor Aurangzib 'Alamgir: Reign 1658-1707 A.D)*, trans. Jadunath Sarkar, Calcutta: Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal, 1947, p. 60.

CHAPTER- III

Mughal State: Religious Practices under Akbar and Aurangzeb

Scholars have categorized the Mughal state as ‘Culture State’ because of the fact that the authority “filled the most important stations with pure integrity and consummate wisdom”.¹ The ruling class was predominantly Muslim, whereas the subjects were mostly Hindus. Akbar provided stability to the Mughal rule through his liberal dispensations and tolerant approach. In the course of time, the Mughal Empire emerged as a state which was, in a true sense, free from shadow allegiance to an external authority like the Caliphate. The Mughals exercised unrivalled power over vast territories over which they had established their control. The Mughal *Padshah* and the Turko-Afghan *Sultan* belonged to entirely different categories of monarchy. For example, law, tradition, expediency (came from Sassanid-Persia) etc. had largely shaped the political outlook of the Turko-Afghan sultans. They considered themselves substitutes of the Caliph, “King was proclaimed to be *the shadow of God on earth*.”² On the other hand, Akbar's theory of kingship, according to Abul Fazl, “the Kingship being a gift of God, which is not bestowed till many thousand grand requisites have been gathered together in an individual”.³ Moreover it stated that “Royalty is a light emanating from God, and a ray from the Sun...Modern language calls this light *farr-i-izidi* (the divine light), and the tongue of antiquity called it *kiyan khwarah* (the sublime halo).”⁴ Abul Fazl's monarch was the well-wisher and guardian of his subjects (*Pad*-stability and possession, *Shah*- origin, lord).⁵ He adopted the titles like *Imad-i-adil* (meaning- ‘The man who is dearest to God on the day of judgement’), *Padshah Ghazi* (meaning- ‘One whose kingdom God perpetuate’), *Amir of the*

*Faithful, Shadow of God on earth, a God-fearing Ruler etc.*⁶ Akbar's concept of Kingship being a gift of God has been linked with the concept of paternal government. He had obtained a liberal policy of religious tolerance, in where tried to linked a communal harmony between the two communities means Hindus and Muslims. Such methods helped him to consolidate his Empire in various ways. In contrast, Aurangzeb's conception of monarchy was radically different from that of Akbar. While Akbar placed the monarchy above religious and sectarian considerations, Aurangzeb made it the handmaid of Islam. He strictly followed Islamic commands and prohibitions (*amr wa nuwahi*).⁷ According to Manucci "This Monarch is also desirous of appearing a great lover of justice. This is why he said one day it was the bounden duty of kings to apply themselves unweariedly and painstakingly to the dispensing of equal justice to everybody. For he said, this duty and that we owe to God for having devoted us to his sole service are the two principal grounds of action on which should rest the conduct of princes."⁸ So here, not only seen a great difference in effect owing to a change in circumstances and environments of Turko-Afghan sultans and Mughal Padshah, but also during the reign of Akbar and Aurangzeb.

In the Islamic world, the question of succession of Prophet Muhammad, brought about a schism in the community of believers. After Muhammad's death (632 A.D.), "the Musalmans found themselves face to face with a difficult problem. The Prophet had given no directions about the choice of his successor." Then, Islam was divided into two sub-sects – the *Shia* and the *Sunni*, and they were engaged with bloody conflict.⁹ An overview of the politics of medieval history of the Indian subcontinent points towards the fact that the Hindu-Muslim relationship was also marred by violence. In particular, the State, under the obligation of the Islamic law (*Shariat*),

tended to dominate the non-believing masses through violence. Prophet Muhammad's teachings, it must be remembered, was based on two revolutionary concepts, viz., the unity of God and unity of human origin. The unity of God, related with the essence of *Tauhid*, demanded 'loyalty to God, not to thrones. And since God is the ultimate spiritual basis of all existence, loyalty to God virtually amounts to man's loyalty to his own ideal nature.'¹⁰ The Prophet declared, 'I have been sent to perfect the morality of mankind',¹¹ and the basis of the new morality was the concept of human equality. So, the *Shariat* actually recognizes no distinction artificially created by birth, status, education, wealth, race, nationality or even religion for that matter. All free born men were declared equal in the eyes of the law. But, the battle of Badr¹² (624 A.D.) and the death of Prophet marks the turning point in the history of Islam. With the extension of Muslim territory, there cropped up a number of new legal problems neither addressed in the Holy *Quran*, nor anticipated by the Prophet or *Hadis*. As a result, hundreds of schools of jurisprudence appeared and presented Islam with their own motives. For example, the *Hanafi* did not utilize *ahadis* (traditions of the Prophet) in constructing his legal system, even though the Prophet recommended a careful study of the *Quranic* spirit to solve new problems.¹³

So, in administrative matters, the Muslim Governments were guided, not by the actual *Shariat* laws, but by what Barani calls the *Zawabit*— the regulations formed by the ruler in the light of exigencies of the time “a rule of action which the king has imposed as an obligatory duty upon himself for realizing the welfare of the state, and from which he absolutely never deviates”.¹⁴ There is no doubt about the fact that religion was used by Muslims rulers as a means to serve a variety of political and religious interests. Hence, right from the 12th century onwards, when the rule of Islam was established over the Indian sub-continent, acts of religious intolerance and

bigotry, sponsored by the state authority, became the norm.¹⁵ To a large extent, hence, the conception of the individual rulers regarding Islam had motivated them for war and conflicts with millions perishing in ethno-religious conflicts in the Indian subcontinent. In sharp contrast, however, the Mughal Empire ushered into a so-called golden age of Islamic-Hindu cross-cultural pollination.¹⁶ For understanding the significance of the Mughal policy of toleration, especially under Akbar, first, it is important to see the actions of the Muslim rulers before Mughals in India. Then justified the executions of the Mughal rulers in the same direction.

From the very beginning, Hindus had long been appointed in positions of responsibility – even dates back to Saffarids. Next, Mahmud of Ghazni, the great destroyer, had reliant of Indian troops served as foot soldiers and cavalrymen under Indian officers. Most of the Muslim rulers had depended on the services of Hindu officials at the level of local administration.¹⁷ However, there was a difficulty to be overcome before the non-Muslims could participate at every level. In fact, the early Turkish rulers had many prejudices against Hindus as well as the Indian converts to Islam. Under the Khaljis, however, a noticeable change took place in this regard. Thenceforth, converts also found employment in high offices, which led to more general employment of Hindus. As we find that during the reign Sher Shah (1538-1545 A.D.), a number of Hindus held different types of military posts. But this type of subjugation of Hindus had not been entirely the result of Islamic attitudes. Even many Hindus had strong protest to serve under a Muslim ruler. But this widespread employment in government offices was not possible until Hindus were willing to learn Persian (the court language).¹⁸ Then from 15th century, when the Muslim rule was established in most of the part of India, many Brahmans and upper classes Hindus had begun to learn Persian, and tried to take possession of the important

government services.¹⁹ Actually, this tolerance and acceptance shown to the Hindus by the Muslim rulers of the time was, put simply, a political move. Ruling an Empire where the majority of the population did not have the same religious views as the ruling class, presented many obstacles, and required the Mughal rulers to practice religious sensitivity in order to maintain power. The repeal of this policy, in particular, in due course, played a key role in the demise of the Empire. In this way, we see that, the Muslim rule based on Islamic principles during the pre-Mughal period were not willing to tolerate the non-Muslim (Hindu) populace. To dominate them, therefore, these states resorted to the policy of stifling persecution. In contrast, under the Mughal system, even though the Emperor remained the main power, but different from Balban's autocratic rule who established his dictatorship. A probable justification of the Mughal departure is sought through the Pathan theory of Kingship, rather than the early 'perfect' democratic Islamic theory. Here the main ideology of Pathan law was "Law was merely the expression of the royal will and of other laws there were practically none." "The Mughals stepped into the shoes of the Pathans and received their system of government as a legacy....The first tasks of the Mughals was to inspire awe and respect in the mind of the conquered people, and for that purpose, it was necessary that the king should be considered all-powerful."²⁰ During the Mughal rule, an attempt was made to approximate a particular ideal, with the concept of paternal government strengthening by Babur and later Mughal rulers. "The central idea of the communal interpretations of the Mughal imperial legacy in its Hindu as well as Muslims articulations boils down to the notion that in the Mughal Empire the entire Muslim community was in the position of a ruling group who all the time endeavoured to keep the Hindu majority subjugated and firmly under control, a

relationship which was hardly allowed any scope for a cultural rapprochement or even cordial interaction between the two communities.”²¹

Mughal Emperor Babur had a firm reliance on his God. Even he believed in the kindness and fidelity of fellow beings. Moreover, he followed the Islamic rules and rituals like- prayers, fasted as prescribed in Islam. However, he took wine, opium and *bhang*. He did not attach much importance to the rituals of Islam and did not allow the principles of Islam to interfere with his ambition or personal pleasures. In his personal life, Babur influenced *Shia* faith, married a *Shia* lady Maham Begum and gave her his affection and appointed her son Humayun as the successor of Mughal throne. He loved the company of learned people. With such a mental outlook, Babur did not ordinarily persecute any sector creed. Influenced by Babur, Humayun, in point of religion, was no better and no worse than his father and would tend him to think little of the communal differences.²² Both for Babur and Humayun, their ideals, aspirations, way of life, and their system of government were the amalgamation of foreign and Indian thoughts. Babur would not like to be buried in India, and if Humayun had not died a sudden death, it is possible that he too would have left a will for his body to be carried to Kabul to lie in permanent rest by the side of his father.²³ It was Akbar who not only reversed the policy of his ancestors but also tried to imbibe Indian thought and way of life. Actually, Akbar alone, of all the Mughal Emperors, made a short-lived attempt to bring about the homogeneity of the people in the field of religion, culture and administration. Still, it lasted hardly for 25 years and was given a goodbye after his death. Jahangir deliberately reverted to the pre-Akbar days in this respect, prohibited the Hindus from marrying Muslim women, and made the offence a capital punishment. Shah Jahan did the same. Aurangzeb and his successors were Muslim monarchs in the orthodox sense of the term.

A study of the Mughal rule in India points towards the fact that though the Mughal rulers claimed to act as agents of Islam theoretically, but in practice, they followed their own track. Like Babur and Akbar who maintained the authority of Caliph or Qazi in their state affairs but were acting solely on their own. It all depended on the individual understanding of each incumbent of the concept of state, religion and Kingship. As a result, it varied widely as each of them worked towards establishing a perfect link between divinity, secular considerations and kingship as per their own convenience. For example, Kingship, in the words of Abul Fazl, was 'Kingship bestowed upon by God'. Fazl argued that the ruler 'bound up with one rule, one guide, one aim and one thought' and established peace for all.²⁴ Akbar had a liberal bent of mind, and the welfare of his subjects and Empire were among his foremost priorities. His individual thought that all religions should be tolerated and believed on that his duty was to behave all believers equally, whatever their belief. So, he worked and issued several orders to win over the hearts and minds of all the communities, mainly the Hindu potentates. Akbar established a form of delegated government in which the provincial governors were individually responsible to the Emperor for the quality of government in their territory. Here a policy followed in all the provinces in where non-Muslims were not compelled to obey Islamic law. At the same time, the Hindus were allowed to be regulated through their own (customary) laws and institutions. Akbar took the policy of religious toleration even further by breaking away from the practices of conventional Islam in matters of administration. Here his religious beliefs drowned with his belief of equality in a term of *Sulah-i-kul* (universal tolerance).²⁵ Abul Fazl has explained Akbar's liberalism in several ways which influenced his state policy. The policy of *sulah-i-kul*, in particular, was a case in hand to exercise absolute royal power by a show of tolerance towards other religions. Under

these tolerance norms, non-Muslims were followed the *Shariat* law; on the other hand, Hindus were granted the freedom to remain under their laws (based on *Dharmashastra*), and to retain their own courts. Here an example highlighted- “The Hindus were so much influenced by the Chisti-cult that we find round about Ajmer a sect called the Husaini Brahmins, who combine the Muslim religion with Hindu manners and custom and rituals. They claimed to be Brahmins and declare the Artharva Veda to be their sacred book but at the same time they observe the fast of Ramjan as much as they observe Sivaratri.”²⁶

It has been argued that the attendance of Bairam Khan, wily Maham Anga, Adam Khan (Maham Anga's son) had impacted Akbar's perceptions of Islam during the formative years of his rule. Vincent Smith, in particular, opines thus that Akbar had an intention to 'make himself Pope as well as king'.²⁷ Hence, Smith interpreted the *Mahzarnamah* of Akbar as an order which 'solemnly recognized Akbar as being superior in his capacity of *Iman-i-Adil* to any other interpreter of Muslim Law'.²⁸ It is interesting to note that Akbar strictly observed the Islamic precepts during his early youth. He offered prayers five times a day and also led the mass on Fridays. In addition, he spent the early hours of every morning in meditation and was heard of chanting the words *Ya Hu, Ya Hadi*²⁹ in the orthodox *Sunni* fashion. In contrast, during the later phase of his life, Akbar could be seen building many places of worship and communicating with the learned men belonging to other religions. Akbar's youth was grounded in the realities of life because it was mostly spent in exile; not having been raised in an imperial bubble allowed him to empathize with the hardships of the common man. Akbar's upbringing in the Persian court, where his father's status was not more than a refugee prince during the time of political unrest, had a lasting impact on his mindset. After Humayun's exile from India, Akbar's idea

of the political rule was driven by his goal of how not losing it again once it had been reclaimed by the Mughals.³⁰ To establish his new vision for the rule of Hindustan, Akbar had to deviate from existing ruling standards in order for his legislative policies and administrative reforms to be implemented as envisioned. He first had to breakaway from some of the traditional responsibilities and privileges of a Muslim ruler so that he could have full reign over his empire – consisting of a large proportion of non-Muslims. “Akbar's interpretation of law included actions that drew their support from the non-Muslim population and deviated from the Muslim belief in the protection of Islamic standards”.³¹ Hence, through his orders, he permitted the constructions and maintenances of Hindu temples, churches and other holy places of worships. This made him a national monarch and ‘to adorn spiritual kingdom’.³² Akbar was greatly influenced by teachers like Abdul Latif Qazvini. Later, the scholars like Shaikh Mubarak and Abul Fazl increasingly influenced Akbar by exposing him to the pantheistic *Sufi* doctrine. Akbar’s contact with the Chisti *Khanqahs* at Ajmer and Sikri and with Shaikh Mu’inuddin Chisti provided the opportunity to become familiar with pantheistic doctrines of *fana*³³ and *wahdat u’l-wujud*.³⁴ Akbar was under the influence of the *Naqshbandiya* order in his early life. Moreover, his liberal outlook can be traced back to his Turko-Mongol background because Chengiz Khan and Timur followed a policy where other religions were treated with respect. The three *Shia* brothers- namely Hakim Abdul Fath, Hakim Humayun and Hakim Nuruddin also attracted the attention of Akbar by their theological orientations.³⁵ However, Smith stated that after the fall of Bairam Khan, *Sunni* influence was again revived under Abu-n Nabi (*Sadr-us-Sudur*) and *Mukhdum-ul-Mulk* Abdullah Sultanpuri (*Qazi*) and the whole theocratic side of the state ran on purely *Sunnis* lines.³⁶

Akbar got the first opportunity to connect with the Hindus through a matrimonial alliance with the family of Raja Behari Mal of Amber in 1562. This alliance made him realize that compared to the Pathan spirit and the Turki tendency of insubordination, the Hindu alliance stood him in good stead. The process of appointment of many Rajput princes as his generals and many Hindus like Tansen, Ram Tirtha, Madhusudan Saraswati, Man Singh, Bhagawan Das etc. counted as 'the first class' in Akbar's court soon followed.³⁷ A Hindu Brahman named Debi, the interpreter of Mahabharata, instructed Akbar in the secrets and legends of Hinduism. According to Badauni Debi was responsible for Akbar's belief in the transmigration of the soul.³⁸ Moreover, the very presence of the Hindu wives in Akbar's *harem* was responsible for the introduction of many Hindu customs into the Chagtai *harem*. The Hindu princesses in the *harem* were allowed to follow their own socio-religious custom under the regime of Akbar. Like Jodha Bai, a daughter of Behari Mal, was allowed to have her own cook. She also had in her *Mahal*- a *Tulsi* plant, along with designated places for *Hom* and *Yagna*.³⁹

To instil people's confidence towards the state and royalty, Akbar instituted the practice of *Jhorokha-darsan*, which was one of the royal prerogatives; whereas, in the court mannerism, he followed the Persian practice of *Sijda* (prostration of the ground) and *Zaminbos* (kissing the ground of the royal throne) sometime around 1577-78.⁴⁰ Under Jahangir, all types of Mughal officers paying respect to the Emperor by continued with the practice of *Sijda*, whereas Shah Jahan continued *Sijda* for a short duration. Because according to Islamic rules, the procedure of prostration was due to God only.⁴¹ Further, to exercise the absolute royal authority over religious matters pertaining to the state, Akbar popularized the face of a king *Ka'bah-i-Muradai* (sanctum of desires), and *Qiblah-i-Hajai* (goal of necessities).⁴² In administrative

matters, through royal orders, the practice of forcible conversion of prisoners of war was stopped. At the same time, *Jaziyah* tax⁴³ and *Tamgha* (inland tolls) were abolished in March 1564.⁴⁴ Prior to that, when Akbar was encamped at Mathura in 1563, he noticed that for a long time, it had been the custom in India for the rulers to take sums from the people who came to sacred places for their worship, which was called *karma*. Akbar's conscience did not allow the imposition of such curbs on religious beliefs and practices. He, therefore, abolished such taxes (pilgrim's tax) throughout his dominions.⁴⁵ Under the influence of his Rajput supporters, he allowed them religious freedom in their faith and participated in their festivals. Akbar decreed that "Hindus, when a child or otherwise, who had been forced to convert to Muslim religion could reconvert to their original faith without any punishment or death penalty."⁴⁶ "No man should be interfered with on account of his religion, and anyone was to be allowed to go over to any religion he or she pleased." "But if a woman fell in love with a Muslim and entered the Muslim religion, she should be taken by force from her husband and restored to her family." Badauni informs that all infields made their worship house, viz. churches, temples, etc.⁴⁷ Under the shadow of liberalism, Akbar, was well linked with the Hindus that eulogies were sung in his praise in songs and religious hymns. Akbar observed and practiced several Hindu customs at a personal level and as the Emperor. He celebrated prominent Hindu festivals like Diwali, Dusserah, Rakshabandhan, Shivaratri, Vasant Panchami, Holi, Ramnavami, Janashtami, etc. During Dusserah, royal troops were reviewed, and robes of honour distributed among the Hindu *mansabdars*. Akbar had jewelled strings tied on his wrists by Brahmins by way of blessing, and, following his custom, many of the nobles took to wearing *rakhi* (protection charms) on their wrists.⁴⁸ In 1583, he had forbidden the eating of beef, and forbade the killing of animals and sale of all types of meats

(oxen, buffaloes, sheep, goat, horses, camels etc.) on certain days.⁴⁹ Badauni writes that Akbar prohibited the slaughter of cows and eating of their flesh because the Hindus devoutly worship them.⁵⁰ On the day of *Id-i Qurban*, the pious gathered for prayers in the local mosque or *Idgah* (place of celebration). The defining act of the celebration was the sacrifice of an animal. But “Akbar’s policy of ‘lasting reconciliation’ – its incorporation of the Indic opposition to meat-eating and violence, led him away from the celebration”.⁵¹ Interestingly, we even come across an order issued by Akbar in 1582 to prohibit fishing for some time.⁵²

Not only that, during the reign of Akbar, the saints and different divines were accommodated by the Mughal government, and they played a vital role in the formation of composite culture at the Mughal court. The Chaitaniya sect of Vrindavan and a large number of temples, for example, enjoyed Akbar’s patronage. Akbar granted large tracts of land as *madad-i-maash*⁵³ to the temples belonging to this sect. He also granted 480 *bighas* of land to Malik Arjunmal of Jangambari Math at Benaras. At the same time, Akbar enjoyed the company of a large number of pandits and saint poets, like Surdas, Khumbandas, Chaturbhuj Das, Madhu Saraswati, Ram Tirtha, Paramindra, Aditya, Dadu, Tulsidas, Naraindas Lohana, Nand Das etc. Akbar’s nobles like Abul Fazl, Abdur Rahim Khan-i-Khanan, Man Singh, and Todarmal enjoyed a close association with these saints.⁵⁴ The Jain *gurus*, like Hari Vijaya Suri, Bhau Chandra Upadhaya, Siddhi Chandra etc., stayed at the Mughal court and received titles, many concession and land grants by Akbar. The influence of Jain *gurus* was so much on Akbar that he abstained from the consumption of meat.⁵⁵ The commanding personality of the great Jain Acharya Hari vijaya Suri, who had been summoned from Gujarat to the Akbar’s court in order to expound the tenets of his faith, made so great an impression on the Emperor that he gave him the title *Jagat*

Guru, or ‘World Teacher’. Upon Suri’s request, Akbar issued two *farmans*- (1) During the twelve days of the *Paryushana* festival (annual holy event of the Jains means “abiding” or “coming together”), which takes place in the month of Bhadrapad, no cattle should be slaughtered in cities where the Jains were residing (7th of *Jamud-us Sani*, *Hijri* 992 or 6th June 1584); (2) When the Jain Acharya was returning to his native place, Akbar made a request that the “heaven reaching” hills of Siddhachal, Girnar, Taranga, Keshsrinath and Abu, all situated in Gujarat, and the five hills of Rajgir, and the hill of Sambat Shikhar alias Parsvanath of Bengal, together with all the *kothis* and temples below these hills, as also all other places of pilgrimage of the Jain *Svetambar* community throughout the Empire, should be handed over to the Jains so that no one may kill any animal on those hills or near those temples (1592 A. D.).⁵⁶ Further, “In 1582, the famous tank called Dabul at Fatehpur, which abounded in fish, was offered to Acharya Hira to stop fishing at that pond.” In the same year, Emperor issued order that royal hunting, and fishing were restricted. In 1582, the Emperor ordered for the ‘release of prisoners and caged birds’. In 1587, the Emperor issued orders stopping the slaughter of animals for nearly 180 days in a year.⁵⁷ According to Smith, the pilgrims to the Satrunjaya, a hill in the district of Kathiawar, was abolished (1590), and the temple of Adiswara was was immaculate and given to Hiravijaya (Jagat-Guru).⁵⁸ Not only that, when Bhanuchandra Upadhaya came at the court of Akbar, the Emperor is said to have recited the *Surya Sahara Namah* with him.⁵⁹

Similarly, under the influence of Dastur Mahayarji Rana, Akbar was gradually drawn towards the ceremonies and culture of the Zoroastrians. As a result, the Persian festivals and holidays entered into the royal list of holidays. He adopted a calendar according to the manner of the Zoroastrians and introduced the solar era, the ‘*Tarikh-*

i-Ilahi’, in 1589 A. D.⁶⁰ The Zoroastrians influence on Akbar was at its peak during 1579-85. He ordered, according to the Parsee custom, that the fire to be lit up and not to be extinguished. Smith remarks, ‘Akbar began to prostrate himself in public before the Fire and before the Sun and when the lamps were lighted in the evening the whole court was required to rise up respectfully’.⁶¹ On Emperor’s order, they built a permanent *hom-kunda* inside the *harem*, which was a ceremony derived from sun worship.⁶² Badauni mentions that on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of his accession, on the new year day, Akbar “prostrated himself both before the sun, and before the fire in public, and in the evening the whole court had to rise up when the lamps and candles were lighted.”⁶³ The Emperor took the griddle (a type of pan) and ring of the Parsee Mobeds, known as *Quseke* and *Zunnar*.⁶⁴ Akbar adopted the Persian *Naurazand Shariff* festivals.⁶⁵ *Nauraz* continued for 19 days, and nobles, common people decorated their houses, invited each other.⁶⁶ “A festival very similar to Holi, called ‘*Ab-i-Pashan*’ by Jahangir and *Id-i-Gulabi* (rose water festival) by Lahori was celebrated” throughout the Mughal Empire. It was “Persian festival in memory of rain.”⁶⁷ It is also said that Raja Birbal tried to persuade the Emperor that “since the sun gave light to all, ripened all grain, fruits and products of the earth, and supported the life of mankind, therefore it should be the object of worship...” Then all the wise men in his court confirmed ‘the sun was “the greater light” of the world, and benefactor of its inhabitants, the patron of kings.’ This was the cause of the worship of the sun on the *Nou-roz-i-Jaladi*.⁶⁸ Some other records highlighted that Akbar was successfully influenced by Zoroastrian religion through the Parsee mission that came to his court from Naosari in Gujarat, headed by a person named Meherji Rana. A perusal of *Dabistan-i-Mazahib*, in this regard, established three facts: (1) The person who came from Naosari asserted the truth of the religion and the great reverence and

worship due to the fire. (2) The Emperor called him to his presence and was pleased to take information about the way and lecture of their wise men. (3) The Emperor ordered Abul Fazl to keep the sacred fire burning day and night. A *farman* issued in the 40th years of Akbar's reign reads that 200 *bighas* of land grant as *madad-i-maash*, was made in favour of Meherji Rana in his native town of Naosari.⁶⁹

With the connection of Christian missionary, Akbar allowed them to build churches at Agra, Lahore, Bengal; and to perform worship openly, to celebrate their festivals and even to convert Hindus and Muslims to Christianity. "In 1603 A.D. an order was issued for permitting the Christians to make willing converts."⁷⁰ Even tolerance of Akbar was helpful to the growth of Sikhism all over the country.

Influence from other faiths further molded Akbar's beliefs in mysticism and Sufism. He was especially intrigued with the *Chishtiyyah* order in India, including *Shaikh* Salim Chishti, who aided Akbar in conceiving his first son Salim (later Jahangir), and *Shaikh* Mubarak Nagawri. One influential aspect of the Sufi doctrine on Akbar was the belief in the transcendent unity of religions while understanding the unique distinctions of each religion. These religious beliefs had focused through his law policy of *sulh-i-kul*. In order to understand the fundamentals of Islam, he ordered, in January 1575, "a house of worship (*Ibadat Khana*) should be built at Fatehpur Sikri to the adornment of the spiritual kingdom."⁷¹ A list of the other regulations related to other religions was promulgated by Akbar, which have been arranged in chronological order below⁷²

1) In between 1575-76 A.D., an order was issued to write a commentary on the *Quran*.

2) In between 1575-76 A.D., the *Atharva Veda* was given for translation to a Deccani Brahman named Bhawan. Saikh Faizi, Badauni and Haji Ibrahim also participated in the process.

3) In between 1576-77 A.D., an order was issued to open a pilgrim department (*Dafter-i-Haj*) with a superintendent of pilgrims (*Mir-i-Haj*). Badauni mentions that ‘Six lakhs of rupees in cash and kind, twelve hundred dresses and numerous presents were distributed at Meccah and Madina’. Additionally, Akbar had a fleet prepared called *Jahaj-i-Ilahi*, consisting of one hundred ships, for conveying the pilgrims. Hemade it known through a general order that everybody might go on pilgrimage and the Government would bear the expenses.⁷³

4) In between 1578-79 A.D., after the arrival of the Christians to the Mughal court, Abul Fazl undertook to translate the Bible with the headline ‘*Ai namivay Gesu Christu*’ instead of *Bismillah-irrahman-irrahim*.⁷⁴ Badauni notes, “His Majesty firmly believed in the truth of Christian religion, and wishing to spread the doctrine of Jesus, ordered prince Murad to take a few lessons in Christianity under good auspices, and charged Abul Fazl to translate the Gospel.”⁷⁵

5) In between 1580-81 A.D., an order was issued to celebrate the Persian festivals *Nauraz-i-Jalali* with great festivity and ceremonies.⁷⁶

6) From 1582 to 1583, after promulgating *Din-i-Ilahi* Akbar established many new regulations-

a) The *Tarikh-i-Alfi*⁷⁷ commenced; b) Wine selling was restricted; c) Ban on prostitute process; d) Boars and dogs were reared up and meat of boar and tiger was allowed; e) Silk dress and gold were permitted to be worn; f) Marriages were regulated; g) The *Sradh* ceremony after death was discouraged;⁷⁸ h) *Azan, Prayers, Fast, Pilgrimage* was regulated and ‘Spurious Quran’ were destroyed in the centres of rebellion; i)

Name of *Ahmad*, *Muhammad* and *Mustaja* were stopped; j) ‘The Assembly of Forty’ (*Chihil Tanan*)⁷⁹ was established.

7) In between 1586-90, Akbar issued a general order that the flesh of cows and buffaloes were prohibited.

8) From 1593 to 1594, a) Freedom of the building of Church was granted to Christians; b) Toleration was granted to all religions.

Actually, in the Quran there is an example of toleration (*Al-Quran Surah*). In Bengal, there had a tradition that the low-class Musalmans independently joined in the Durga puja and other Hindu festivals.⁸⁰ Akbar believed that universal toleration was only the path of the Prophet in its true spirit and perspective. Here the forces of time, the spirit of Renaissance, the *sufi* tendencies of the age, the teaching of Shah Abdul Latif, the constant association with the saints of different creeds of the age and his innate nature were all responsible for that open preaching of the principle of universal toleration in the land of Hindustan.

A process symbolized the master incorporating his (Akbar’s) servant's body into his own and served as a visible sign to all others of the receiver's status and loyalty to Akbar, and that was the gift exchange process. For example, gift exchanging process is known as *Nazar*- “Akbar issued a general order that every person from the highest to the lowest should bring him a present.” “Those who offered the most valuable presents generally received the highest rewards” from the Emperor. Like “When a prince was born the nobles offered jewels , money, elephants or horses as presents to the emperor.”⁸¹ Sometimes, the more valuable gifts were called *Peshkash*.⁸² *khilat* (royal cloak) was also a gift-giving ceremony.⁸³ For maintaining royal charity, Akbar opened Khair Pura for the Muslims, Dharm Pura for the Hindus, Jogi Pura for the

Hindu Yogis. Some of the nobles (mainly related to Abul Fazl) were put in charge of them, and they spent the ruler's money feeding the poor.⁸⁴

Akbar's re-imagining of legislative policies and administrative reforms in the subcontinent should be viewed as tools to aid in fulfilling the larger objective of the legitimization of his rule, and more importantly, the Mughal Empire. Some of the historians argue that Akbar's actions were not based entirely on his policy of religious tolerance but also because other political advantages of controlling revenues of the entire Empire and legitimizing it by supporting a popular Hindu king. Akbar's religion has, thus, been seen 'to be the outcome of a political necessity, the need of a universal religion in which Hindus and Muslims could join.' Alternatively, others assert that 'Akbar became the supreme head of the Church because he wanted to keep the warring factions at peace.'⁸⁵ Yet another view proved that Akbar rated a high kingly position- "The very sight of kings", Akbar said, "has been held to be a part of divine worship. They have been styled conventionally the Shadow of God; and indeed, to behold them is a means of calling to mind the Creator, and suggests the protection of the Almighty."⁸⁶ It is interesting to note that whereas, Abul Fazl talks in terms of Akbar as "a spiritual Guide to the people," Badauni had discussed the regulations of Akbar purely from the point of view of an orthodox *Mulla*.

Jahangir imposed twelve orders as rules of conduct (*dastur-ul-'amal*) in all his dominions-

(1) 'Forbidding the levy of cesses under the names of *tamgha* and *mirbahri* (river tolls), and other burdens which the *jagirdars* of every province and district had imposed for their own profit'.

(2) 'On roads where thefts and robberies took place, which roads might be at a little distance from habitations, the *jagirdars* of the neighbourhood should build *sara'is* (public rest house), mosques, and dig wells'.

(3) In his dominion, 'if anyone, whether unbeliever or Musalman, should die, his property and effects should be left for his heirs, and no one should interfere with them. If he should have no heir, they should appoint inspectors and separate guardians to guard the property so that its value might be expended in lawful expenditure, such as the building of mosques and *sara'is*, the repair of broken bridges and digging of tanks and wells'.

(4) He 'forbade the cutting off the nose or ears of any person, and he himself made a vow by the throne of God that he would not blame anyone by this punishment'.

(5) He ordered that every year from, started from 18th of Rabi 'u-l-awwal, which was Jahangir's birthday, for a number of days corresponding to the years of his life, should not slaughter any animals (for food)' etc.⁸⁷

Though most of the policies of Jahangir seemed liberal, but he actually defends Islam. This becomes clearer from the perusal of a contemporary record which reads, "All men hoped much from the new king, and especially the Fathers, who believed that his accession would lead many to embrace the Christian faith. For up to that time, he had been looked upon almost as a Christian. But these hopes were disappointed; for he had sworn an oath to the Moors to uphold the law of *Mahamede*, and being anxious at the commencement of his reign, to secure their good will, he gave orders for the cleansing of the mosques, restored the fasts and prayers of the Moors."⁸⁸ If Akbar was liberal, Jahangir was indifferent in various questions of theology. In contrast, Shah Jahan was an orthodox Muslim. Though his state was not Islamic, his judiciary was based on imperialism. He earned the praises of almost all the Muslim chroniclers of

his reign and came to be regarded as the great Muslim king.⁸⁹ He was always concerned about restoring the lost privileges of Muslim communities. Though based on Elphinstone's report, "treatment of his (Shah Jahan) people was beneficent and paternal".⁹⁰

In his personal life, Aurangzeb was an orthodox Muslim. His main object was to convert the lands of the infidels into *Dar-ul-Islam*. As his observant attitude, Aurangzeb ended the policy of religious tolerance followed by earlier Emperors. As a young boy, he became well-versed in the Quran, the science of *Hadith*,⁹¹ and other aspects of Islamic theology. He strictly followed the Islamic commands and prohibitions and was an enthusiastic reader. He read and wrote in Arabic, Persian, and Chagatai Turkic, the language of his ancestors. He was also trained in the art of calligraphy. Some of his calligraphic works are still in existence today. According to *Badshah Nama*, Mir Hashin Gilani was the tutor of Aurangzeb, whereas Maulavi Abdul Sultanpuri seems to be his first teacher. Hamiduddin, in *Ahkum-i-Alamgiri*, remarks that Aurangzeb also used to take lessons from the Wazir, Sa'adullah Khan. Also, Aurangzeb read the famous Imam Ghazali's book *Ahya-ul-Uium* under the guidance of Danishmand Khan. He was very fond of the works of the pamphlets written by saints and *sufis* and was well acquainted with Turki, Hindi, and Hindustani. On the basis of contemporary shreds of evidence, it has been argued that had Aurangzeb not been a powerful sovereign, he would have still attained fame as a profound scholar of Islam.⁹² The contemporary Mughal court chronicler, Saqi Mustad Khan describes Aurangzeb in the following manner, "As his blessed nature dictated he was characterized by perfect devotion to the rites of the Faith he followed the teaching of the great Imam Abu Hanifa (God be pleased with him!) and established and enforced to the best of his power the five foundations of Islam (five daily

prayers). He was ever performing the purificatory lavation (before prayer) and repeating the blessed words (of the Prophet) and other holy sayings and prayers. He used to perform obligatory prayers for the time (of the day) in the masjid or without a masjid in congregation, and all the *sunnan* and *nawafil* and the dearly loved (*mustahabbat*) ceremonies publicly and with perfect humility. Fasting every month on the 12th and 13th days from the new moon (the brightest days) every week on Monday, Thursday and Friday, he used to perform the Friday prayer in the congregation mosque (*Jam'i*) in the company of all the Muslims and the community of the faithful.”⁹³ One of Aurangzeb’s main goals was to bring true Islamic governance to the Mughal Empire. Previous Emperors, while all Muslim, had not all ruled according to Islamic law. His great grandfather Akbar, for example, regularly went against Islamic beliefs by adopting many non-Islamic religious beliefs and practices in his personal life as well as in his rule of the Empire. Aurangzeb’s insistence on Islamic rule was based on his previous education and his strong religious convictions. In order to practice Islamic law in the Empire correctly, Aurangzeb insisted on compiling Islamic law into a codified book that could be much more easily followed. He thus brought together hundreds of scholars of Islam from all over the Muslim world to organize such laws. The result was a landmark text of *fiqh* (jurisprudence) in the *Hanafi* School⁹⁴ known as the *Fatawa-i-Alamgiri*, meaning “The Religious Decrees of Alamgir”.

Based on *Shariat* law (Islamic law) over the whole Empire, Aurangzeb discontinued the practice of *Jharoka-darshan* or salutation balcony for the public since he considered it seemed too much like human worship and against Islam.⁹⁵ Actually, it can trace this to his father’s time about how rumours fuelled the throne during Shah Jahan’s sickness, instead of the superstitious background. Similarly, he has given up

the ceremony of “weighing of the Emperor’s body against gold, silver and various other commodities” especially on his birthdays (*tuladan*), due to Hindu custom. “But he continued believing in its efficacy for warding off evil and even recommended this short cut to attaining happiness in this world to one of his grandsons.”⁹⁶

On 2nd April, 1679, Aurangzeb re-imposed *Jiziyah*. *Jiziyah* was first imposed by Muhammad who bade his followers “fight those who do not profess the true faith, till they pay *Jiziyah* with the hand in humility.”⁹⁷ The ninth chapter of the Holy Quran (verse no. 29) explained the poll-tax- *Jiziyah* in the following manner- “Make war upon such of those, to whom the Scriptures have been given, as believe not in God, or in the last day, and who forbid not that which God and his apostles have forbidden, and who profess and not the profession of the Truth, until they pay *Jiziyah* with their hand and be subdued.”⁹⁸ Following the Muslim canon law, Aurangzeb sought to re-impose it as it was abolished by Akbar in 1563 A.D. Manucci notes, “Many Hindus who were unable to pay (the poll-tax), turned Muhamedans, to obtain relief from the insults of the collectors.”⁹⁹ Aurangzeb introduced this tax for two reasons- “First, because by this time his treasures has begun to shrink owing to expenditure on his campaigns; secondly to force the Hindus to become Muhammadans.”¹⁰⁰ It is believed that “*Jiziyah* was to be collected annually at the rate of twelve *dirhams* from a poor, twenty-four *dirhams* from a middle class man, and forty-eight *dirhams* from a rich man... It should not be collected in rupees... A *zimmi* should himself come to pay it. He should come on foot. The collector should sit while the *zimmi* should stand.”¹⁰¹ The re-imposition of *Jiziya* in 1679 A.D. by Aurangzeb has been an important theme of debate in history writing. Over a period of time, the dominance of the progressive school of thinkers has led to believe that the *Jiziya* was not imposed on religious grounds but purely due to economic and political factors. Historians have further

argued that the re-imposition of *Jiziya* marks the culmination of the spirit of religious bigotry. “A tax on the free exercise of religion was replaced by a tax for exemption from military service.”¹⁰² But later on, it led to the alienation of the Rajputs, the Marathas and the Hindus, which, in turn, hastened the disintegration of the Mughal Empire.

By an ordinance issued on 10th April 1665, custom duty or *masul* on all commodities brought in for sale in the market was fixed both for Hindu and Muslim traders. However, on 9th May 1667, the Emperor abolished it in the case of the Muslim traders, though the Hindus continued to pay at the old rates.¹⁰³ According to Manucci, Before Aurangzeb, most of the Mughal Emperors took Rs. 6.4 tax from every pilgrim at Allahabad, but Aurangzeb abolished it.¹⁰⁴ Aurangzeb even abolished the proceeds from fines, presents, pasturage, road tax, ferries etc.¹⁰⁵ “Every pagoda” writes Manucci, “paid to the King every year a considerable sum. It was very undesirable, he (Aurangzeb) said, to levy such a tax, for thereby it looked, as if he approved of idolatry. He, therefore, directed that such a tax should never be collected.”¹⁰⁶ Another tax abolished by Aurangzeb was a tax on carrying the bones of the dead Hindus for being thrown into the Ganges.¹⁰⁷ A glimpse of the contemporary sources reveals that Aurangzeb removed various types of road/transit taxes. The *Maasir-i-Alamgiri* notes, “At this time, according to his usual generosity the collection of road-toll (rahadari) on the transit of grains and other articles was abolished forever. On this account the crown-lands made a sacrifice to the amount of 25 lakhs of rupees a year, and what was given up for the whole Empire cannot be imagined.”¹⁰⁸ On the other hand, the Emperor imposed a ban on *ziyarat* and gathering of the Hindus at religious shrines, such as of Shitla Mata and folk Gods like Pir Babu in September 1667.¹⁰⁹ Orders were issued banning the travel of the Hindus in *Palkis*, or riding horses, elephants. In

1693 A.D. issued “that no one, except the princes and the nobles, should approach the *qulalbar* on a palanquin without the permission of His Majesty.” Next, in 1695 A.D. issued “a *farman* was circulated throughout the camp and the provinces that, excepting the Rajputs, the Hindus should not ride elephants, *palkis* and thoroughbred horses, and should not carry arms.”¹¹⁰ During the time of April 1685, the conversion charge of a Hindu male was to be Rs.4/- and a Hindu female Rs.2/-. Aurangzeb imposed it through orders when it was reported to him that in the month of April 1667, the Faujdar of Bithur, Shaikh Abdul Momin, had converted 150 Hindus and had given them *naqd* (cash) and *saropas* (dresses of honour).¹¹¹

As per the tradition initiated by Akbar, the accession of a Hindu Rajas was solemnized by the Emperor’s making the sacred sign, *tika*, on the forehead of the new Raja if he was present in the court. Aurangzeb discontinued this practice in 1679.¹¹² On certain (auspicious) days of the month, the Hindus organized fairs and festivities near their holy places. They used to take a dip in the sacred water and performed worship of the idols and other rituals. The Mughal government, on such occasions, earned a large sum from toll/taxes levied on such markets. But in 1668, Aurangzeb forbade such fairs throughout the Empire.¹¹³ Such display of Islamic orthodoxy by the State under Aurangzeb gave strength and purpose to the resistance movements such as the Marathas, the Jats, the Bundelas and the Sikhs. The Penal code issued by Aurangzeb were- (1) When theft has been proved against any man by legal evidence before the *Qazi*, the *Qazi* should inflict the punishment in his own presence and keep him in prison till he manifests signs of penitence for his crime.

(2) For gambling with dice, *tazir* and confinement are the punishment; for repetition ling term imprisonment. Property won to be restored to the owner or kept in trust.

(3) For selling wine in a city of Islam or a village, the offender should be chastised with severe blows. In case of repetition of the offence, imprisonment till reform was recommended.

(4) If a *zimmi* (male or female) takes a Muslim (male or female) as his or her slave, or a *zimmi* takes a Muslim woman or a Muslim a *zimmi* woman other than “the people of the book” (i.e. Jews and Christians), place the offender before the Qazi to act according to the Canon Law.

(5) When a murder has been proved against any man according to the Holy Law or in close to certainty, it keeps the offender in prison and reports the facts to the Emperor.

(6) If anybody castrates another’s son, chastise and imprison him till he repents.

(7) If any leader (*rais*) of Schismatic instigates other to innovations in religion (*bidat*), and there is a strong probability of the spread of *bidat* (heresy) through his instigation, do him *sinsat*.

(8) The vendors of bhang and similar intoxicants should be chastised, and if habitual offenders, kept in prison on till they repent.

(9) If a man kills another by drowning him in water, throwing him into a well, or hurling him down from a hilltop or roof, chastise and imprison him and cause to be given (to the heirs of murdered man) the *diya* or exculpatory fine which the Canon Law lays down. If he repeats the offence, do him strict *siasat*.

(10) Any Zaminder who are habitual robbers and usurpers, and whose death is required in the public interests, after proof, inflict *siasat* etc.¹¹⁴

Mirat-i-Ahmadi refers to an incident in which local officials of Ahmedabad arrested an innocent person in a case, and the incident was not reported by the *waqainawis*. Aurangzeb got the news from another source and later issued an order to punish the concerned official. “It is reported to his Majesty that person who are imprisoned for

certain offences in the *subah* of Ahmedabad, administrators practice delay in investigation of their affairs and do not decide and dispose them off so that an innocent man may be released from prison and an offender may be punished. A *farman* is, therefore, issued to the administrators of the said *subah* in respect of above persons to deal with them in accordance with sections embodied in the *farman* so that none with them in prison without a cause and none may suffer tyranny and oppression. It is necessary that the asylum of minister-ship should act in execution of this *farman* in consultation with the *Nazim* of the *subah*. Facts should always be reported. It should be regarded as an injunction. Mir Khan, an eminent *amir* is derived of his *mansab* out of displeasure.”¹¹⁵

Here in punishments, all the Emperors followed the Islamic Law, which formed on the judgments of the Qazis. Punishments were four kind -

- (1) *Qisas* (retaliation applied in the cases of killing).
- (2) *Diya* (compensation paid by one who has committed homicide).
- (3) *Hadd* (the fixed punishment prescribed by the Canon Law for stoning for illicit intercourse and cutting of hands for theft).
- (4) *Tazir* (punishment inflicted by a Qazi according to his estimation).¹¹⁶

Further, Aurangzeb issued orders for punishing the wicked person, and he tried to solve the problem of children. According to *Maasir-i-Alamgiri*, “The Emperor ordered the *Subehdars* and *Faujdars* of the provinces of Allahabad and Oudh to search for and send manacled and fettered to the Court of those men who castrated children and to regard it as a peremptory order that no one should be allowed to engage in this wicked practice.”¹¹⁷ But there was another side to it, which was justified by some scholars. As such alcoholism, gambling, and prostitution were combated by the imperial government. He ordered that the prostitutes and dancing

girls should marry or else leave the Empire.¹¹⁸ Taxes that were not in line with Islamic law (*abwabs*) were also abolished, a policy that was very popular with the Mughal Empire's subjects. He abolished duties on the sale of fish, ghee or mustard seed oil (*roughan-i-karuah*), milk and curd, kitchen vegetables, ground rent for a stall in *bazars* (*pandari* tax), earthen pots and dishes made in villages and towns etc. Tax levied on the birth of a male child, fee for the *darogha* and *kotwali*, license tax on traders like butchers, footmen etc., were also abolished. One of the *abwabs* abolished in Bengal was called '*bhet* and *begar*' or presents and gratuitous labour.¹¹⁹ To make up for the loss in tax revenue, Aurangzeb adopted a very simple lifestyle and did not live in a lavish manner as his father had. Royal traditions that he considered extravagant were abolished, such as court musicians and festivities on the Emperor's birthday.

As regards his attitudes towards Hindus and Sikhs in general, it can be seen that they were neither prejudiced nor discriminatory. Many Hindus worked in the royal court as officials and advisors. It is believed that the proportion of the non-Muslims under court employment under Aurangzeb was larger than that during the time of Akbar – arguably the most tolerant of the Mughal Emperors. With Hindus and Sikhs occupying positions in his government and military, Aurangzeb's case was far from being simply a religious bigot who refused to acknowledge the contributions of his non-Muslim subjects. Alexander Hamilton, an eighteenth-century English traveller, provides interesting detail of the population composition of Bengal. He notes, "The religion of Bengal by law established, is Mohametan, yet for one Mohametan there are above a hundred pagans, and the publick offices and Posts of Trust are filled promiscuously with men of both Parswasions."¹²⁰

The preservation of Hindu temples with Islamic religious justification has been a long-running tradition in India. The first Muslim army to come to India in 711 A.D. under Muhammad bin Qasim promised religious freedom and security of temples to the Hindus and Buddhists. The same policy continued under the different Muslim rulers in India afterwards. So far as Aurangzeb is concerned, it is evident that he did not disregard the Islamic laws regarding the protection of religious minorities. “Aurangzeb himself even noted that Islamically, temple desecration was not permitted.” In 1659 Aurangzeb wrote, “According to the *Shariah* (Islamic law), and the exalted creed, it has been established that ancient temples should not be torn down”.¹²¹ It ought to be mentioned here that the political nature of the temples during the seventeenth century was the main reason behind their demolition. Hindu and Sikh temples (unlike Muslim mosques) were not just places of worship. They also had political significance. Temples acted as political offices and state property, and the priests who were in charge of them were in the services of the government. When seeking to get the support of Hindus in a particular area, Mughal Emperors (and even Hindu kings in non-Mughal areas) would rely on the priests to rally the local population through the temple. As such, a temple was more than just a religious building; it was also a potentially powerful political tool.¹²²

Historians have always debated Aurangzeb’s achievements as a ruler in terms of religion and ideology. According to some, he destroyed the policy of religious toleration and thus undermined the loyalty of all communities (except Sunni Muslims) to the Empire. Scholars like Sir Jadunath Sarkar have characterized Aurangzeb as a bigot. He was keen that the *shariat* or Islamic law be followed everywhere. Conversely, some modern historians think that Aurangzeb had been unreasonably grudging. The Hindus, by this time, had become too powerful, and Aurangzeb had no

choice but to adopt harsh measures. Certain scholars like Zahiruddin Faruki have conveyed the impression that all of Aurangzeb's policies were determined by genuine socio-economic needs of the time only, and religion had no role to play at all. Actually, the destruction of sacred places is not countenanced by Islamic law. Most of the temples in Aurangzeb's reign were destroyed because of the narrow interpretation of the Islamic law by the Muslim Jurists.¹²³ Alexander Hamilton described, 'The Gentows' "...have full toleration for their religion, and keep their fasts and feasts as in former times, when the sovereignty was in pagan princes' hands.....There are above a hundred different sects in this city (Surat); but they never have hot disputes about their doctrine or way of worship. Everyone is free to serve and worship God their own way. And persecutions for religion's sake are not known among them."¹²⁴ It should be noted that Akbar had adopted a policy of religious tolerance, based on liberalism, and attempting to foster communal harmony between Hindus and Muslims.¹²⁵ He found pleasure in innovating acts of offensiveness against Islam. Such methods helped him to consolidate his Empire in various ways. But Aurangzeb rejected all the liberal religious viewpoints of his predecessors after his accession. In 1669, Aurangzeb, in his "...eager to establish Islam, issued orders to the governor of all the provinces to demolish the schools and temples of the infidels and with the utmost urgency put down the teaching and the public practice of the religion of these unbelievers".¹²⁶ Interestingly, mosques were destroyed during the reign of Akbar, who also forbade the construction of the new ones, but Aurangzeb followed a similar attitude with respect to the Hindu temples which were destroyed during his reign.¹²⁷

¹Prasad, Beni, *History of Jehangir*, Allahabad: The Indian Press, 1930, pp. 94-115.

²Nizami, Khaliq Ahmad, *Some Aspects of Religion and Politics in India during the Thirteenth Century*, Aligarh: Department of History, 1961, pp. 95-97.

³Abul Fazl, *Akbarnama*, trans. H. Beveridge, Vol. II, Calcutta: Asiatic Society, 1897, p. 421.

⁴Abul Fazl, *Ain-i-Akbari*, Vol. I, trans. H. Blochmann, Calcutta: Asiatic Society of Bengal, 1873, p. 3.

⁵Ibid, p. 2.

⁶Abul-Qadir Ibn-I-Muluk Shah or Al-Badaoni, *Muntakhbu-T Tawarikh*, trans. George S. A. Ranking, Vol. II, New Delhi: Atlantic Publishers and Distributors, Reprint 1990, pp. 278-79.
Mehta, J.L., *Advanced Study in the History of Medieval India*, Vol. III, New Delhi: Sterling Private Limited, Reprint 2012, p. 291.

⁷Faruki, Zahirudddin, *Aurangzeb and His Times*, Delhi: Idarah-i-Adabiyat-i-Delhi, 1972, p. 546.

⁸Manucci, Niccolao, *Storia Do Mogor or Mogul India, 1653-1708*, trans. William Irvine, Vol. III, London: Royal Asiatic Society, 1907, pp. 260-61.

⁹Nizami, *Some Aspects of Religion and Politics in India during the Thirteenth Century*, p. 16.

¹⁰Ibid, pp. 1-2.

¹¹Ibid.

¹²*The Battle of Badr*, www.al-islam.org, retrieved on January 2021. The Muslims and the Mecca had fought several smaller skirmishes in late 623 and early 624, which laid the foundation of the Islamic state. "Hitherto Islam had been a religion within a state; in al-Madinah, after badr, it passed into something more than a state-religion- it itself became the state." Cited by Nizami, *Some Aspects of Religion and Politics in India during the Thirteenth Century*, p. 15.

¹³Mehta, *Advanced Study in the History of Medieval India*, vol. I, p. 309. See also, *Hanafi Shool of Law*, www.encyclopedia.com retrieved on 7th May, 2011. Its followers were the chief authors on formularies (*shurut*) of Islam.

¹⁴Habib, Mohammad, *The political theory of the Delhi Sultanate (Including a translation of Ziauddin Barani's Fatawa-i Jahandari, Circa 1358-59 A.D.)*, Allahabad: Kitab Mahal, p. 64.

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- ¹⁵Aquil, Raziuddin, *The Muslim Question: Understanding Islam and Indian History*, New Delhi: Penguin Random House India, April, 2017, pp, 28-31.
- ¹⁶Greg, Sarafan, *Muslim Hindu Religious Interactions in the Mughal Empire: The Birth and Death of a Cohesive Culture*, sensiblereason.com, retrieved on 6th November, 2011.
- ¹⁷Siddiqui, Zeba, *City of Agra under the Mughals from 1526-1707*, Aligrah: Aligarh Muslim University, 2006, p. 334, ir.amu.ac.in, retrieved on 12th October 2017. Also see, Raza, S. Jabir, “Hindus under the Ghaznavids” in *Proceedings of the Indian History Congress*, 71, 2010-2011, p. 214.
- ¹⁸Siddiqui, Zeba, *City of Agra under the Mughals from 1526-1707*, p. 334.
- ¹⁹Chatterjee, Kumkum, “Scribal elites in Sultanate and Mughal Bengal” in *The Indian Economic and Social History Review*, 47 (4), 2010, pp. 445-72. Also see, www.columbia.edu, retrieved on 2017.
- ²⁰Khosla, R. P, *Mughal Kingship and Nobility*, Allahabad: The Indian Press, Ltd., 1934, p. 3, 6.
- ²¹Khan, Iqtidar Alam, “State in the Mughal India: Re-examining the Myths of a Counter-vision” in *Social Scientist*, 29 (1/2), January/February, 2001, pp. 17-18.
- ²²Zahiruddin Muhammad Babur Padshah Ghazi, *Babur-Nama (Memoirs of Babur)*, trans. Annette Susannah Beveridge, Vol. I and Vol. II in one format, New Delhi: Oriental Books Reprint Corporation, Reprint March, 1970, pp. 691-716. Also see, Banerji, S. K., “Humayun’s Religion” in *Proceedings of the Indian History Congress*, 1 (2), June 1935, p.48.
- ²³Verma, Abhas, *How does the nature of the Delhi Sultanate and the Mughal Empire compare?* www.quora.com, retrieved on 14th Aug, 2016.
- ²⁴Abul Fazl, *Akbarnama*, trans. H. Beveridge, Vol. III, Calcutta: Asiatic Society of Bengal, 1939, pp. 5-8.
- ²⁵*Ain-i-Akbari*, tr. H. Blochmann, Vol. I, p. 211. See also, Holland, Christopher. P, *Akbar and the Mughal State: The Quest for Legitimization in Hindustan*, juro.uga.edu, retrieved on May, 2005, p.7.

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- ²⁶Roy Chaudhury, Makhanlal, *The Din-i-Ilahi or The Religion of Akbar*, Delhi: MunshiramManoharlal, 4th Edition 1997, p. 11. Also see, Berit, Ase and Rolf Strandskogen, *Lifelines in World History*, London: Routledge (Taylor and Francis Group), 2015, p. 234.
- ²⁷Smith, Vincent, *Akbar: The Great Mogul (1542-1605)*, London: Oxford University Press, 1917, p. 178.
- ²⁸*Ibid*, 179.
- ²⁹*Ain-i-Akbari*, tr. H. Blochmann, Vol. I, p. 179. *yahu* means O He (God) and *yahadi* means O Guide, the repetition of such names is a means of knowledge.
- ³⁰Holland, *Akbar and the Mughal State: The Quest for Legitimization in Hindustan*, p. 5.
- ³¹*Ibid*, pp. 5-6. See also Mehta, *Advanced Study in the History of Medieval India*, Vol. II, p. 286.
- ³²Mehta, *Advanced Study in the History of Medieval India*, Vol. II, p. 286.
- ³³Habib, Irfan, ed. *Akbar and his India*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1998, p.87. *Sufi* doctrine, brought by Bayazid Bustani; It implies that human attributes are annihilated through union with God.
- ³⁴*Ibid*, p. 87. *Sufi* doctrine, brought by Ibn al-‘Arabi; meaning the unity of being.
- ³⁵Mehta, *Advanced Study in the History of Medieval India*, Vol. II, pp. 200-210.
- ³⁶Smith, *Akbar: The Great Mogul (1542-1605)*, p. 43. Also see, Roychoudhury, *The Din-i-Ilahi or The Religion of Akbar*, p. 122.
- ³⁷Roychoudhury, *The Din-i-Ilahi or The Religion of Akbar*, p. 136-39.
- ³⁸*Ibid*, p.141.
- ³⁹*Ain-i-Akbari*, tr. H. Blochmann, Vol. I, p. 184. Also see, Roychoudhury, *The Din-i-Ilahi or The Religion of Akbar*, p. 143.
- ⁴⁰Mehta, *Advanced Study in the History of Medieval India*, Vol. II, p. 302. This system was continued by Akbar long before the promulgation of Din-i-ilahi.
- ⁴¹Sharma, Sri Ram, *The Religious Policy of the Mughal Emperors*, Asia Publishing House, Bombay, 1940, p. 105.

⁴²*Muntakhbu-T-Tawarikh*, tr. George S. A. Ranking, Vol. II, p. 264.

⁴³Mehta, *Advanced Study in the History of Medieval India*, Vol. III, pp.49-50. Derived from the word *jaza* means compensation of requital from good or evil, the poll tax for the security of life and property in Muslim state, and also as compensation for military service, levied on Jews, Christians, Zoroastrians, and Hindus.

⁴⁴*Ain-i-Akbari*, tr. H. Blochmann, Vol. I, p. 189. Also see, Sharma, *The Religious Policy of the Mughal Emperors*, p. 36. Both of these taxes brought in several *krors* of *dams*. Edicts were sent over the whole Empire.

⁴⁵Abul Fazl, *Akbarnama*, trans. H. Beveridge, Vol. II, pp.294-95.

⁴⁶*Muntakhbu-T-Tawarikh*, tr. George S. A. Ranking, Vol. II, p. 405. Also see, Akbar, en.wikipedia.org, retrieved on 12th May, 2016.

⁴⁷*Muntakhbu-T-Tawarikh*, tr. George S. A. Ranking, Vol. II, pp.405-06.

⁴⁸*Muntakhbu-T-Tawarikh*, tr. George S. A. Ranking, Vol. II, p. 269. Also see, Sharma, *The Religious Policy of the Mughal Emperors*, p. 41.

⁴⁹Sharma, *The Religious Policy of the Mughal Emperors*, pp. 40-41.

⁵⁰*Muntakhbu-T-Tawarikh*, tr. George S. A. Ranking, Vol. II, p. 266.

⁵¹Blake, Stephen P, *Time in Early Modern Islam: Calender, Ceremony, and Chronology in the Safavid, Mughal, and Ottoman Empire*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013, p. 85.

⁵²Sharma, *The Religious Policy of the Mughal Emperors*, p.41.

⁵³Mehta, *Advanced Study in the History of Medieval India*, Vol. II, p. 585. A type of land grant or pension to scholars and saints, usually made by the state.

⁵⁴Roychoudhury, *The Din-i-Ilahi or The Religion of Akbar*, pp. 139-44.

⁵⁵*Ibid*, p. 159.

⁵⁶Commissariat, Manekshah Sorabshah, *Imperial Mughal Farmans in Gujarat: Being Farmans mainly issued in favour of ShantidasJawahari of Ahmadabad by the Mughal*

Emperors, Ahmedabad: Hazrat Pir Mohammed Shah Library and Research Centre, Edited by Mohainuddin Bombaywala, 1st Edition 2011, pp. 9-10.

⁵⁷Smith, *Akbar: The Great Mogul (1542-1605)*, p. 167. See also, Roychoudhury, *The Din-i-Ilahi or The Religion of Akbar*, pp. 159-60.

⁵⁸Smith, *Akbar: The Great Mogul (1542-1605)*, pp. 166-68.

⁵⁹Roychoudhury, *The Din-i-Ilahi or The Religion of Akbar*, p. 161.

⁶⁰*Ain-i-Akbari*, tr. H. Blochmann, Vol. I, p. 195. Also see, Roychoudhury, *The Din-i-Ilahi or The Religion of Akbar*, p. 151. Sharma, Introduced at the instance of Mir Jamaluddin; Akbar greatly influenced the Zoroastrian culture during the year 1579-85 whereas the Era was introduced in 1589 as he converted to the sun and star worship.

⁶¹Smith, *Akbar: The Great Mogul (1542-1605)*, p. 164.

⁶²*Ain-i-Akbari*, tr. H. Blochmann, Vol. I, p. 184. Also see, *Muntakhbu-T-Tawarikh*, tr. George S. A. Ranking, Vol. II, p. 262 and Roychoudhury, *The Din-i-Ilahi or The Religion of Akbar*, p. 154. The branch of a certain tree offered by Parsees as a substitute for soma juice.

⁶³*Muntakhbu-T-Tawarikh*, tr. George S. A. Ranking, Vol. II, p. 269.

⁶⁴Roychoudhury, *The Din-i-Ilahi or The Religion of Akbar*, p. 152.

⁶⁵*Ibid*, p. 155.

⁶⁶Jahangir, *The Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri (Memoirs of Jahangir)*, trans. Alexander Rogers, ed. H. Beveridge, Vol. I, London: Royal Asiatic Society, 1909, p. 49. "Nouroz when 'the great world-illuminating luminary entered the sign of Aries'- at the commencement of the Farwardin (March)" cited in Roychoudhury, *The Din-i-Ilahi or The Religion of Akbar*, p. 155.

⁶⁷Chopra, Pran Nath, *Some Aspects of Society and Culture during the Mughal Age (1526-1707)*, Agra: Shia Lal Agarwala and Co. (p.) Ltd., 1963, pp. 94-95.

⁶⁸*Muntakhbu-T-Tawarikh*, tr. George S. A. Ranking, Vol. II, p. 261.

⁶⁹Ambashthya, B.P., *Contributions on Akbar and the Parsees*, Patna: Janaki Prakashan, 1st Edition 1976, pp.11-21.

⁷⁰Sharma, *The Religious Policy of the Mughal Emperors*, p. 39.

⁷¹*Akbarnama*, tr. H. Beveridge, Vol. III, p. 157. See also, Habib, Irfan, ed. *Akbar and his India*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1998, pp. 86-88.

⁷²Roychoudhury, *The Din-i-Ilahi or The Religion of Akbar*, pp. 220-24 .

⁷³*Akbarnama*, tr. H. Beveridge, Vol. III, p. 715. Roychoudhury, *The Din-i-Ilahi or The Religion of Akbar*, pp. 148-49. In 1596, Akbar built a *jahaz* at Lahore on a shallow barge, which could carry 15000 mans. The construction began on 24thTir and finished on 28thAsar.

⁷⁴*Muntakhbu-T-Tawarikh*, tr. George S. A. Ranking, Vol. II, p. 267.

⁷⁵*Ibid.* See also, Roychoudhury, *The Din-i-Ilahi or The Religion of Akbar*, pp. 236-38.

⁷⁶*Muntakhbu-T-Tawarikh*, tr. George S. A. Ranking, Vol. II, p. 261.

⁷⁷*Akbar*, www.cs.mcgill.ca, retrieved on 2007. 'The history of a Thousand Years' to celebrate the year 1000 (1591-92 CE) on the Muslim calendar.

⁷⁸Jafar Sharif, *Islam in India or the Qanun-i-Islam (The Customs of the Musalmans of India)*, trans. G. A. Harklots, Oxford University Press, 1921, p. 105. Because the death feast for Muslims in India was an Indian custom and has no connection with Islam. For nine days after a death most people cannot eat or drink at the house of the deceased, nor invite the members of it to feasts.

⁷⁹Roychoudhury, *The Din-i-Ilahi or The Religion of Akbar*, p. 257. It was an intellectual assembly of the wise man and it had behind it a purely Islamic tradition, known as *The Chihil Tanan* or the *The Forty Adals*.

⁸⁰*Islam in India or the Qanun-i-Islam (The Customs of the Musalmans of India)*, tr. G. A. Harklots, p. 8.

⁸¹Khosla, *Mughal Kingship and Nobility*, pp. 273-77.

⁸²*Ibid*, p. 277.

⁸³Eaton, *The Rise of Islam and the Bengal Frontier: 1204-1760*, p. 76.

⁸⁴*Muntakhbu-T-Tawarikh*, tr. George S. A. Ranking, Vol. II, p. 334. Also see Sharma, *The Religious Policy of the Mughal Emperors*, p. 44.

⁸⁵Roychoudhury, *The Din-i-Ilahi or The Religion of Akbar*, pp. xxv-xxvi.

⁸⁶Smith, Akbar: *The Great Mogul (1542-1605)*, p. 178.

⁸⁷*The Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri (Memoirs of Jahangir)*, trans. Alexander Rogers, ed. H. Beveridge, Vol. II, pp. 7-9.

⁸⁸Ross, E. Denison and Eileen Power, eds. *Jahangir and the Jesuits (With an Account of the Travels of Benedict Goes and the Mission to Pegu)*, trans. C. H. Payne, London: George Routledge and Sons, 1930, p. 3.

⁸⁹Sharma, *The Religious Policy of the Mughal Emperors*, p. 117.

⁹⁰Elphinstone, Mountstuart, *The History of India (The Hindu and Mohamedan Periods)*, ed. E. B. Cowell, London, 1874, p. 603. Also see, Mehta, *Advanced Study in the History of Medieval India*, Vol. II, p. 460.

⁹¹*Meaning and Place of Hadith in Islam*, ddeku.edu.in, retrieved on 12th March, 2011. It refers to the saying or customs of Muhammad and his companions.

⁹²Faruki, *Aurangzeb and His Times*, pp. 543-44.

⁹³Saqi Must'ad Khan, *Maasir-i-'Alamgiri (A History of the Emperor Aurangzib-'Alamgir (reign 1658-1707 A.D))*, trans. Jadunath Sarkar, Calcutta: Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal, 1947, p. 312.

⁹⁴The founder of this school was Imam Abu Hanifah and his school is considered 'as the most tolerant school of Islam' cited in Nizami, *Some Aspects of Religion and Politics in India during the Thirteenth Century*, p. 36.

⁹⁵Sharma, *The Religious Policy of the Mughal Emperors*, pp. 127-128.

⁹⁶*Ibid*, p.128.

⁹⁷Jadunath, *History of Aurangzeb (Northern India, 1658-1681)*, Vol. III, M. C. Sarkar and Sons, Calcutta, 1928, p. 268.

⁹⁸Faruki, *Aurangzeb and His Times*, p. 141.

⁹⁹*Storia-Do-Mogor or Mogul India (1653-1708)*, tr. William Irvine, Vol. II, p. 234.

¹⁰⁰*Ibid*.

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- ¹⁰¹Ali Muhammad Khan, *Mirat-i-Ahmadi (A Persian History of Gujarat)*, trans. M. F. Lokhandwala, Baroda: Oriental Institute, 1965, pp. 264-65.
- ¹⁰²Sarkar, *History of Aurangzeb (Northern India, 1658-1681)*, Vol. III, p. 275.
- ¹⁰³Ibid, p. 276.
- ¹⁰⁴*Storia-Do-Mogor or Mogul India (1653-1708)*, tr. William Irvine, Vol. II, p. 82. Also see, Sakar, Jadunath, *Mughal Administration*, Calcutta: M. C. Sarkar and Sons, 1935, p. 105.
- ¹⁰⁵Faruki, *Aurangzeb and His Times*, p. 151.
- ¹⁰⁶*Storia-Do-Mogor or Mogul India (1653-1708)*, tr. William Irvine, Vol. II, p. 51.
- ¹⁰⁷Sarkar, *Mughal Administration*, p. 105.
- ¹⁰⁸Maasir-i- 'Alamgiri (*A History of the Emperor Aurangzib- 'Alamgir (reign 1658-1707 A.D)*), tr. Jadunath Sarkar, p. 16.
- ¹⁰⁹www.aurangzeb.info, retrieved on May, 2008.
- ¹¹⁰Faruki, *Aurangzeb and His Times*, p. 176.
- ¹¹¹www.aurangzeb.info, retrieved on May, 2008.
- ¹¹²Sharma, *The Religious Policy of the Mughal Emperors*, p. 128.
- ¹¹³Sarkar, *History of Aurangzeb (Northern India, 1658-1681)*, Vol. III, pp.278-79.
- ¹¹⁴Akbar, Muhammad, *The Administration of Justice by the Mughals*, Kashmiri Bazar, Lahore (Pakistan), 1944, pp. 54-61.
- ¹¹⁵*Mirat-i-Ahmadi (A Persian History of Gujarat)*, tr. M. F. Lokhandwala, p. 253.
- ¹¹⁶Ibid, p. 61.
- ¹¹⁷Maasir-i- 'Alamgiri (*A History of the Emperor Aurangzib- 'Alamgir (reign 1658-1707 A.D)*), tr. Jadunath Sarkar, p. 48.
- ¹¹⁸Sharma, *The Religious Policy of the Mughal Emperors*, p. 131.
- ¹¹⁹Sarkar, *Mughal Administration*, pp.121-127.
- ¹²⁰Hamilton, Alexander, *A New Account of the East Indies*, ed. Sir William Foster, Vol. II, London: The Argonaut Press, 1930, p. 14.
- ¹²¹*Aurangzeb and Islamic rule in India*, www.egypttoday.com, retrieved on 24th June, 2017.

¹²²www.aurangzeb.info, retrieved on May, 2008.

¹²³Faruki, *Aurangzeb and His Times*, p. 139.

¹²⁴Faruki, *Aurangzeb and His Times*, p. 139. Also see, Hamilton, Alexander, *A New Account of the East Indies (1688-1723)*, Vol. I, New Delhi: Asian Educational Services, 1995, pp. 156-64.

¹²⁵en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Akbar, 12th May, 2016.

¹²⁶*Maasir-i- 'Alamgiri (A History of the Emperor Aurangzib- 'Alamgir (reign 1658-1707 A.D))*, tr. Jadunath Sarkar, pp. 51-52.

¹²⁷Faruki, *Aurangzeb and His Times*, pp. 565-66.

CHAPTER- IV

The Pre-Mughal Bengal: Society, Culture and Religious Traditions

Bengal has been a land with rich and equally diverse history, culture and heritage. During the Hindu Muslim period, Bengal also made tremendous contributions to a wide range of subjects. It attracted students from all over India; and foreign travellers praised its people for their integrity and good character. During the medieval period, there was an amalgamation of the Islamic and Hindu cultures. Hindu elites not only imitated their fellow Muslims in their dress, mannerisms and etiquette, but they also studied Arabic and Persian and become well acquainted with Islamic cultural traditions. Sebastien Manrique, a contemporary Italian traveller, noted thus, “the Bengalis are of a white complexion and pompous and dainty in their way of living and dressing; but in this and other similar declarations, I shall not abide by him...what I shall tell will be the result of personal observation and long experience. Relying therefore on truth, I declare that the natives of Bangla have a brown complexion, and many are black like the *Chingalas*. They have a well-proportioned appearance of face and limbs and are of ordinary stature.”¹ The economy in Bengal improved considerably during the Muslim rule as a result of the province’s interactions with the Arabian and Persian traders and seafarers. Likewise, Bengali literature witnessed a major change during the medieval period, thanks to the generous patronage of the Muslim rulers. Muslim and Hindu scholars, writers and poets have left their indelible marks on Bengali literature during this period.

“Bengal, the deltaic region of the Ganges, Brahmaputra, and Meghna rivers, is the easternmost haven of Indo-Iranian culture on the Indian subcontinent.”² Hindu

scriptures such as the *Mahabharata* and *Raghuvamsa* suggests that “*vanga* is a country to the east of the Gangetic delta” (*Ganga-srota’ntara*)³, “and *pundravardhana* is a country bounded on the west by the Ganges with the Mahananda and on the east by the Karotoya.” Moreover, Gouda emerged during the 7th to 12th century in a wider sense which was known as Bangala in the Muslim period.⁴ In addition, “the original word Vangala was transliterated by the Muslims as bang or Bangala or Bangalah (Bangala). From this word, Portuguese derived the word Bengala which has been transliterated by the English as Bengal.”⁵ Abul Fazl explained a theory of the origin of the name of Bengal in his *Ain-i-Akbari*. According to him, “The original name of Bengal was Bang. Its former rulers raised mounds measuring ten yards in height and twenty in breadth throughout the province which were called *Al*. From this suffix, the name Bengal took its rise and currency.”⁶ It is also said that “*al* in the Bengali language means an ‘embankment’ or raised ground, which is placed round a garden or cultivation, so that floods may not enter it. As in ancient times, the chieftains of Bengal on lowlands which were situated at the foot of hills, used to raise mounds about ten cubits high and twenty cubits broad, and to make homes, cultivations, and buildings within them, people used to call this country Bangalah.”⁷

Ancient Bengal was the seat of Buddhism. The Mauryan ruler Asoka made Buddhism an imperial cult and tried to spread it all across the world. An inscription at Nagarjunakonda (Andhra Pradesh during the 2nd or 3rd century) alluded to Bengal as a great Buddhist region.⁸ After that, during 405–11 A.D., a visiting Chinese pilgrim highlighted “twenty-two Buddhist monasteries in the city of Tamralipti (Tamluk) in southwestern Bengal”, which was “India’s principal seaport.”⁹ During the pre-Asokan period (mainly 2nd century B.C.), Pundrabardhan emerged as a seat of culture and

political activities; and in the third century B.C. of both Buddhism and Jainism flourished here, including all over northern Bengal.¹⁰ During the time of Sena rulers, there was the revival of Brahmanical Hinduism and the decline of Buddhism “because of changes that had occurred in the nature of Buddhism”. Then started a great change in the society of Bengal with the introduction of *Kulinism*¹¹ under the patronage of the Sena rulers. Thus all these processes prepared the path for the spread of Islam from the thirteenth century onward.¹² In the meanwhile, *Shaktism* became very prominent in Bengal; and from the end of the fifteenth century, *Vaishnavism* also grew to be popular under Shri Chaitanya. Before that, during the 7th Century A.D., many forms of lord Vishnu seem to be established all over Bengal. It was succeeded by Bhagavan Ananta Narayan in eastern Bengal, basically in the forest region. Then, from the 6th century onwards, the Krishna legend seems to have taken strong roots. There are many *bhajans* (devotional prayers to the God –the Supreme Personality of Krishna, and his devotees), which are written in the Bengali language.¹³ In the middle of the eighth century, region-based imperial systems emerged in Bengal, some of them patronizing Buddhism, others revitalizing Brahmanism. Under the first Pala Empire, the Indo-Buddhist civilization expanded and flourished overseas. However, Buddhist institutions saw tremendous development in eastern India.¹⁴ But, “By the eleventh century even the Palas rulers, earlier such enthusiastic patrons of Buddhism, had begun favouring the cults of two gods that had emerged as the most important in the newly reformed Brahmanical religion – Siva and Vishnu.”¹⁵ However, the Sena rulers introduced yet another form of devotional Hindu culture in the form of Saivism, and extended royal patronage (like, Vijayasena started to worship Sambhu, another name of Siva). “As a result, by the end of the eleventh century...royal patronage had shifted from a primarily Buddhist to a primarily Hindu orientation” in Bengal.¹⁶

Under the Brahmanic tradition, several goddesses such as Durga, Chandika, Chamundi, Kali, Vaishnavi, Narayani, Maheshwari, Shakti, Gauri, and Mahamaya, gradually emerged. The worshippers of the Goddesses were those communities who lived on the margins of settled society. The emergence of the great Goddess Devior Mahadevi, for example, during the fifth and sixth centuries was the result of the interweaving of various conceptual and mythological threads.¹⁷ At the same time, two other forms of the Goddess, viz. ‘Durga’ and ‘Kali’ were well known in early centuries in Bengal. During the Sultanate and Mughal rule over Bengal, we come across the continuing association of the Goddess under the patronage of the local Rajas as well as zamindars (mainly from the South-Western part of Bengal). Reference can be made to Raja Ganesh (1400–1421 A.D.), who usurped effective power from the sultan of Bengal, and his son, who is said to have converted to Islam and ruled as Sultan Jalaluddin Mahumud (1415–1432 A.D.). They “proclaimed their association with the goddess by performing ritual worship.”¹⁸ In addition, various forms of Vishnu and Shiva were also popular during this period. A Vaishnavite inscription of Bengal refers to six forms of Vishnu— “Govindasvamin, Sveta-Varahasvamin, Kokamukhasvamin, Pradymnesvara, Ananta-Narayana and Nanna-Narayana.”¹⁹ Though during several hundred years of Muslim rule, it was not expected that all rulers would be free from religious bias or the desire to win converts even by coercion, but it must be noted that mass conversion to Islam took place in Bengal because a large number of Hindus occupied state services including the office of ministers. “Hinduism had prohibited the outcast from residing in the same village as the twice-born Brahman, had forced” them (Sudras and other common people) “to perform the most menial and repulsive occupations, and had virtually treated...as an animal undeserving of any pity.” In contrast, “Islam announced that the poor, as well

as the rich, the slave and his master, the peasant and the prince, were all equal in the eyes of God.” Therefore, under the Muslim rule in Bengal, “many a despairing *chandal* and *kaibartta* joyfully embraced Islam a religion that proclaimed the equality of man, and which was the religion of the race, keeping in subjection their former oppressors.”²⁰ The reasons for conversion to Islam might have been either mundane, for gaining royal favour, job opportunities and economic gains, or genuine love for the faith and desire to be free from oppression from people belonging to higher castes. From Bengal, several communities have entered the fold of Islam like *Jola* (weavers), *Mukeri* (livestock holders), *Pithari* (cake-sellers), *Kabari* (fish-mongers), *Garasal* (converts from the local population), *Sanakar* (loom-maker), *Hajam* (circumciser), *Tirakar* (bow-maker), *Kagaji* (paper-maker), *Kalandar* (wandering faqir or holy men), *Darji* (tailors), *Rangrez* (dyers), *Kasai* (beef-sellers), *Gola* or *Goala* (milk-men) etc.²¹ They were linked with the village economy (agriculture), industries (textile), and military services as well. They continued the professions in which they were engaged before accepting Islam, and through this way, the society had been changed.²²

Pre-Mughal Bengal society was dominated by the system of *Kulinism*, introduced by the Sena King, Ballala Sena. This was to designate some lineages of Brahmins as well as Kayasthas (and *Baidyajatis* who were not associated with them) who had descended from the Kanaujiya immigrants as being of higher social status than others on account of their purer, superior virtues and practices. Here *Kulin* signified an improvement in social status and rank vis-à-vis other lineages within the same *jati*. These three *jatis* in Bengal “began to articulate an almost formulaic litany of nine specific virtues, which apparently were essential for the attainment of *Kulin* status.”²³ “These virtues included correct practice, modesty, scholarship, and the act of installing or establishing deities for the purpose of worship, dedication or

commitment, right livelihood, meditation, charity and going on pilgrimage”²⁴ (*acahrovinayavidyapratishthatirtha-darshanam/britti, tapo, danamnavadhakula-lakshanam*²⁵). Even Ballala Sena decreed that *Kulin* Brahmins should only intermarry with other *Kulin* Brahmin lineages. If a *Kulin* Brahmin married the daughters of non-*Kulin* Brahmins (known as *Shotriya* Brahmins), it was not permitted. During the Sena and post-Sena periods, these types of purely social interaction within the Hindu or Brahmanical *jatis* could act autonomously. They even constituted *samajas* or communities, which were held together by marriage within the group.²⁶ The process of authorization was continued by Hindu kings and *zamindars* in Bengal. Even they held high official and bureaucratic positions under the Muslim rulers of Bengal. But, later on, the new Brahmanical society (*Vaidika* Brahmins, *Barendra* Brahmins, *Barendra* and *Uttar-Rarhiya* Kayastha communities) rejected and challenged the institution of *Kulinism*. They took it as a violation of customary rankings among various *jatis* as well as of the pattern of social relations (including marriage practices). It also transferred too much power into the hands of the king, who could misuse it to settle personal vendettas and petty sectarian rivalries. The orthodox Brahmins, on the other hand, had been trying for a long time to preserve their high social status in Bengal.²⁷ “But the influence of Buddhism, in particular the *tantras*, and, finally, the advent of Islam had rendered this endeavour difficult.” The accession of Raja Ganesh hinted to the Brahmanical society that difficult times might be over. The Raja “appointed many *Barendra* Brahmins in particular as his ministers; he also encouraged and supported Brahmanical scholars and *kulacharyas* to initiate reforms or *samikaranas* of many *jatis*, and he actually presided over these sessions.” There was reportedly a great ascendancy of high-status Hindus, particularly Kayasthas. But also *Barendra* Brahmins during this time through their accession to many important

bureaucratic offices in the king's administration. This situation continued into the reign of Ganesh's son and successor, Sultan Jalaluddin. Later on, these Baidyas and Kayasthas got opportunities through their involvement in bureaucratic positions at all levels of the Muslim government.²⁸

The influence of the Brahmanic ruling class could be very well seen over the society and culture of Bengal. It is interesting to note that "they did not adopt the language of Bengal until the establishment of the Muslims rule in Bengal." Sanskrit was their cultural and religious language.²⁹ A well known Sanskrit couplet bears testimony to their (Brahmins) ill-will "If a person hears the stories of the Eighteen Puranas or if the Ramayanarecited in Bengali, he will be thrown into the hell called *Rourvana*."³⁰ There was a corresponding Bengali couplet which is also well-known - "Krittivasa (the translator of the Ramayana in Bengali), Kalidasa (the translator of the Mahabharata in Bengali) and those who aspire to mix with the Brahmins too closely, are the greatest of evil-doers."³¹ Under these circumstances, many Buddhist monks and scholars migrated to Nepal, and further to the East. Islam made its first appearance in Bengal during the 12th century A.D. with the arrival of the *Sufi* missionaries. Later on, occasional Muslim conquerors reinforced the process of conversion by building mosques, *madrassas* and *sufi khanqahs*. Bakhtiar Khilji, in 1202 A.D., overran Bihar and Bengal as far east as Rangpur, Bogra and the Brahmaputra River without much resistance. Next, the Khilji and other Muslim invaders "may have been helped by the local Muslims and Buddhists in fighting against the Brahmanic Sena rule." At the same time, "many Buddhists viewed the Muslim invasion as a miraculous delivery from Brahmanic oppression. The story of coming of Muslims to Maldah and Jajpur narrated by a Buddhist scholar evidence this view."³² "In Jajpur and Maldah (north-western Bengal), around sixteen hundred

families of Vedic Brahmanas became strong and assembled in groups of 10 or 12. They killed the *Sat-Dharmis* (Buddhists) who would not pay their religious fees, by uttering incantations and curses. They recited mantras from the Vedas and fire came out from their mouths, as they do so. The followers of *Sat-Dharma* trembled with fear at the sight there of, and prayed to Dharma; for who else could give them succour in that crisis? The Brahmins began to destroy the creation in the above manner, and acts of great violence were perpetrated on the earth. Dharma, who resided in Baikuntha, was grieved to see all this. He came to the world as a Muhammadan. On his head, he wore a black cap, and in hand he held a cross-bow. He mounted a horse and was called Khoda. The gods of all being one mind entered Jajpur and broke the temples and *Mathas* and cried ‘seize’ ‘seize’. The entire episode has been described in a song by one Ramai Pandit as ‘a great confusion!’”³³ In such a situation, a new chapter began in Bengal under the Muslim authority.

Out of the 550 years of Muslim rule in Bengal, it was subjected to Delhi-based rule over it for nearly 200 years, whereas for approximately 350 years, Bengal remained virtually independent. R.C. Majumdar divides the history of Bengal into three phases: the Hindu period, the pre-Mughal period and the Mughal period. Hindu Bengal implies that pre-Islamic Bengal was populated and ruled by Hindus. The Muslim rule of Bengal is usually divided into three phases. The first phase, which lasted from 1204 to 1342 A.D., witnessed the consolidation of Muslim rule in Bengal. It was characterized by extreme political instability. The second phase lasted from 1342 to 1576 A.D., whereas the third phase, which lasted from 1576 to 1757 A.D., witnessed the emergence of a centralized administration in Bengal within the framework of the Mughal Empire.³⁴ “Leaving out the viceroys and rebel sultans from Qutub-ud-din to Md Tughlaq Shah (1202-1339)” and Ali-ud-din Mubarak (1339-1348), pre-Mughal

Bengal was ruled by independent local dynasties – Early Ilyas Shahi dynasty (1348-1414), the dynasty of King Ganesha or Hindu Dynasty (1414-1442), Later Ilyas Shahi dynasty (1442-1487), Abyssinian dynasty (1487-1493), Husain Shahi dynasty (1493-1539), Sur Dynasty (1539-1564), Karrani Dynasty (1564-1574).³⁵ So far as the Delhi based rulers of Bengal are concerned, they enforced the following “6 compulsory stipulations for non-Muslim living under a Muslim ruler: (1) no criticism of Quran, (2) no criticism of the Prophet, (3) no criticism of Islam, (4) no marriage or adultery with Muslim women, (5) no seduction from the true faith, (6) no help to the enemies of Islam. The building of new temples could be prohibited,” and non-Muslims solved their cases by their own judges.³⁶ Shamsuddin Ilyas Shah founded the Ilyas Shahi dynasty in 1342 A.D. The dynasty successfully repulsed attempts by the Delhi rulers to subdue them. They continued to rule in the territory of modern-day Bengal, reaching Khulna in the south and Sylhet in the east. During the Ilyas Shahi period the advanced civic institutions became more responsive; considerable architectural projects were completed, including the construction of the massive Adina Mosque and the Darasbari Mosque, which still stands in Bangladesh. Most of the Sultans of Bengal were patrons of Bengali literature and began a process in which Bengali culture and identity would flourish. The Ilyas Shahi Dynasty was interrupted by an uprising by the Hindus under Raja Ganesha. He was identified as Raja Kans according to Abul Fazl- “A native of Bengal named Kans fraudulently dispossessed Shams-ud-din, who was Ghiyas-ud-din’s grandson. When he (Kans) died, his son embraced Islam and took the name of Sultan Jalaluddin.”³⁷ The Ganesha dynasty began with Raja Ganesha in 1414. As a part of his policy, he started to persecute Muslims. It is said that a Muslim Saint named Saikh Kutb-al-alam, in order to save the Muslims from persecution, invited the king of Jaunpur to invade Bengal.³⁸ Facing

an imminent threat of invasion, Raja Ganesha approached Kutb-al-Alam. The saint is said to have relented on the condition that Raja Ganesha's son Jadu would convert to Islam and rule in his place. Raja said, "I have become old, and desire to retire from the world. You may convert to Islam this son of mine, and then bestow on him the kingdom of Bengal."³⁹ Therefore, Jadu embraced Islam and became the new ruler with the name Jalaluddin Muhammad Shah in 1415 A.D. "The ordinance of sacred Muhammadan law from that day were again put in force."⁴⁰ Kutb-al-Alam died in 1416 A.D. and Raja Ganesha was emboldened to depose his son and rule as *Danujamarddana Deva* (devoted to the feet of goddess Chandi).⁴¹ Jalaluddin tried to reconvert to Hinduism by the *Golden Cow* ritual ("The Rajah prepared several gold figures of cows, shoved in Jalaluddin's through their mouths and pulled him out from their buttock-sides, and then distributed the gold of those cow figures among the Brahmans and thus reconverted his son to his own creed.") . But the backward Hindu society refused to accept his *suddhi*.⁴² After the death of his father, Jalaluddin became the ruler and took revenge from those Brahmanas who were his father's main advisors and compelled them to eat beef.⁴³ Jalaluddin's son, Shamsuddin Ahmad Shah could rule for only three years due to chaos and anarchy. On the whole, the dynasty is known for its liberal policy, justice and charity.

The HussainShahi dynasty ruled for the period 1494–1538 A.D. Alauddin Hussain Shah, considered as the greatest of all the sultans of Bengal as Bengal cultural renaissance took place during his reign. He extended the sultanate rule in most of the part of Bengal. Nusrat Shah made a treaty with Babur and saved Bengal from a Mughal invasion. For a brief period, Sher Shah ruled over Bengal. His administrative skill showed in his public works, including the Grand Trunk Road connecting Sonargaon in Bengal with Peshawar in the Hindu Kush. Akbar, the greatest of the

Mughal Emperors, defeated the Karani rulers of Bengal in 1576. Afterwards, Bengal came once more under the control of Delhi. It became a Mughal *subah* which was ruled through the office of *subehdars* (governors). Akbar exercised progressive rule and oversaw a period of prosperity (through trade and development) in Bengal and northern India. Later, Aurangzeb was so fascinated by the trade and wealth of Bengal that he called the region 'Paradise of the Towns'.⁴⁴ Under the Mughals, the new ruling class got deeply attached to the culture of Bengal. As a result, the gulf between the *ashraf* Muslims- recognized themselves with "the new wave of outsiders", and non-*ashraf* Muslims- "increasingly identified as native Bengali Muslims." "Economically, the advent of the Muslim rule greatly stimulated the production of manufactured goods in Bengal, especially for exports to the imperial court in North India. The conquest also furthered the exploitation and settlement of Bengal's forested hinterlands, a process that greatly altered the delta's social landscape. All these forces were to have enduring significance for the evolution of Islam and Muslim society in Bengal."⁴⁵

It has been argued that the process of Islamization of Bengal started from this time. Historian James Wise puts forward the following reasons behind this Islamization process in Bengal: (1) From the 13th and 14th century some enthusiastic soldiers started to spread Islam through the path of persecution, a force within the different communities of Bengal. Even many despairing Chandal and Kaibartta joyfully embraced Islam. (2) An extensive trade along the Chittagong coast by the Arab merchants continued the persecution process of Islamization (3) The slavery system throughout the Bengal frontier etc.⁴⁶ So Wise concluded, "that the Bengal Muhammadan of the present day is a converted Hindu and not a scion of any Mughal or Pathan stock."⁴⁷

H. Beverley resolved in his 'Report on the census of Bengal' in Bengal, found a process of conversion to Islam of a large number of people mainly from low castes Hindu. "...the existence of Muhammadan in Bengal is not due to the introduction of Mughal blood into that country as to the conversion of the former inhabitants for whom a rigid system of caste discipline rendered Hinduism intolerable."⁴⁸ But Abu A. Ghuznavi, a respectable Muslim elite person of 1870s of Mymensingh District explained that the majority of modern Muhammadans are not the descendants of lower-caste Hindu, such as Chandals and Kaibartyas, but actually, they are the foreign extraction, though in many cases it may be of more or less remote degree.⁴⁹ Khondkar Fuzli Rubbee published in his 'The Origin of the Musalmans of Bengal' that the present Musalmans of this country were those the descendants of the population of the old Musalman capitals like Gour, Tanda etc. But before that, "the ancestors of Musalmans came from 'foreign parts during the rule of the former sovereigns'. He cited numerous charitable grants (*aima*) to holy men, venerable person and the leader of Musalmans in Bengal, suggesting that these became the bases of foreign settlements. It was divided into two parts- one was free from assessment, other was very lightly assessed. *Aimas* are to be found mostly in Rarh (southwest), less in Barind (north), and rarely in Bang (east).⁵⁰

The only evidence for pre-Mughal persecution of Hindus by Muslims rulers involves limited persecution under the rule of Jalaluddin, the son of Raja Ganesha. *Riyaz-as-Salatin* refers to his revenge from those Brahmans who were among his father's main advisors as he compelled them to eat beef. The persecution was, however limited to Brahmanas.⁵¹ Kirtilata, a contemporary poet of Jalaluddin, described how far the Muslims (Turks) were stringent about the Hindus, though Hinduism and Islam flourished in Medieval Bengal. "The Turks persecute the Brahmanas on the roads, and

they forced the Brahmanas to carry beef. They tore out the physical witness of Brahmanism, and even lower caste Turks abuse the higher class Brahmanas.”⁵² This was in sharp contrast to the earlier period when the “*Sufis* propagated Islam in Bengal much earlier than the political conquest of the area by Muslims.”⁵³ The major *Sufis Silsilahs* were *Chishtiyah*, *Suhrawardiyah*, *Qadiriya*, *Naqshbaadiya*, *Madari*, *Adhami*, *Sattariya*, etc. ‘exerted a great deal of influence in Bengal’ with spiritual aspects of Islam (*Tasawwuf*).⁵⁴ “Individual *Sufis* are reported to have possessed the ability to perform miracles, and many people are reported to have accepted Islam as a result of their contact with them.” The founder of *Chishtiyah* order in Bengal was Shah Abdullah Kirmani during the first half of the thirteenth century. Then a saint known as Akhi Sirajuddin contributed to the spread of this order in Bengal in 1357 A.D.⁵⁵ A number of people are said to have embraced Islam at their hands by Sufi correspondence (*maktubat*) and saying (*mal-fuzat*).⁵⁶ *Mal-fuzat* included an autobiography, collections of poetry, conversational discourses of a Sufi; and letters exchanged between Sufi saints known as *maktubat*. Various biographical dictionaries are known as *Tazkiras*.⁵⁷ Next *Suhrawardiyah* order was introduced by Shaikh Jalaluddin Tabrezi (mid-thirteenth century) in Bengal before the establishment of Muslim rule. “His piety, ideal character and humanitarian services are reported to have had a great impact on the common people of Bengal.”⁵⁸ A Sanskrit work, *Shek Subhodaya*, written by a Brahman poet, described the story of king Vikram Kesari (ruler of Mangalkot in Burdwan). During the 13th century, Raha pir, a Muslim saint, preached Islam at Mangalkot. But King Kesari tried to persecute him forcefully. Then the saint wrote to the Delhi sultan, complaining against the king. Lastly, the king defeated by Muslim force and fled to East Bengal. Finally, Mangalkot passed in the hands of Muslims.⁵⁹ Another saint of the *Suhrawardiyah* order (mostly founder) was

Shaikh Jalauddin Tabrezi. Some record mentioned that Jalaluddin Tabrezi was also known as Shah Jalal. According to Ibn Batuta, Shaikh Jalal was in Baghdad when Mongols invaded the city in 1258. He travelled to Bengal, where Ibn Battuta met with him (Sylhet in 1346 A.D.).⁶⁰ Other famous *Sufi* saints in Eastern Bengal were PanchPir, Munna Shah Darwish of Sonargaon, Pir Baba Auliya of Chittagong, Adam Shahid of Bikrampur etc. The *Qanoon-i- Islam* contains a list of such *Sufi* saints in India.⁶¹ Bhojar Brahmin, the author of *Amita Kunda*, was impressed by the teaching of Islam and accepted it during the reign of Alauddin Ali Mardan Khalji. On the other hand, Qadi Rukn al-Din Muhammad Samarqandi, the most famous theologian of Lakhnauti, turned to the study of Sanskrit and the local languages with the help of Bhojar Brahmin.⁶² Sultan Ghisuddin Iwaz Khalji built a mosque, a college and a caravan-sarai at Lakhnauti after his election to the *masnad* of Bengal. It was during his reign that the famous Darasbari Masjid at Gour came into being.⁶³ The Sultans of Bengal patronized Muslim religious institutions and promoted literary and historical works composed in Persian, partly to demonstrate their continuing ties to the distant but still prestigious Perso-Islamic world. Two categories of *Tasawwuf* literature represent important historical sources of that period- Mystical Speculations (Path, Deity, and Guide) and The Mystical Discipline and their practice and techniques. The records of sayings and admonitions or biographical notices of the *Sufi* masters gave a boost to the process of Islamization.⁶⁴ After the establishment of the Muslim rule, the use of the Bengali language received a remarkable boost from two directions. First, Persian speaking rulers appointed Bengali poets at their courts in order to promote the language as well as to communicate with the common people in the region. Individual rulers like Alauddin Hussain Shah were eulogized as '*jagat bhushan*' or the ornament of the world by Hindu Bengali writers. Secondly, the *Sufi* preachers learned Persian

and adopted it as the medium of their *da'wa*⁶⁵ activities in Bengal to popularized Islam. They developed *pothi* literature (traditional document in Bengal) along with ascetic *ma'riifati* and *murshidi* songs. “Most of these works deal with the life of the Prophet of Islam and stories of his disciples, or with the miraculous activities performed by the Muslim saints. This method of *da'wah* activities continues even today in present Bangladesh.”⁶⁶ Bengali mystical verses can be found in *pothi* literature, such as, “*The fruit grows from the tree, and the tree again from the fruit...The egg comes from the bird, And the bird again from the egg...’All is one’-is the essence of truth...Sharia and Marifa are essentially one.*”⁶⁷ Medieval Bengali Muslim writer Saiyyad Sultan of Chattagram wrote his *Rasul Bijoy* (The Victory of the Prophet). These have been written on a historical basis as followed by the *Maghazi* books (narratives of early Islamic military wars).⁶⁸ *Hawz al-Hayat*, an Arabic translation of the yoga manual of *Amit-Kunda* also highlighted the interaction and assimilation of Hindu-Muslim activities in Medieval Bengal.⁶⁹ “The literary activities of Muslim mystics also suggest that they were rivals and competitors of the Brahmanpandits.”⁷⁰ For example, we have gathered many accounts about the legend poem or story of *Pir. Arif*, a Muslim poet, wrote a poem on *Satya Pir*; on the other hand, in 1664 A.D., Sankaracharya gave an account on *Satya Narayan*.⁷¹ All these examples suggest that both political and religious leaders of the Muslim community were involved in missionary activities in Bengal. Muslim rulers patronized the language of the people in their courts. The religious leaders spoke and wrote in the language of the local population in order to convey the message of Islam in a more popular manner.

During this phase, common Bengali culture was gradually being established by the Muslim *fakirs* and *Sufi* saints who made use of Bengali and Sanskrit alphabets in their

writings. Hussain Shah, a great patron of learning, regarded himself as an incarnation of Krishna (later on the Bengali people began to identify Akbar with lord Siva, Lord Kartik as Qazi, Goddess Chandi as Amma Hava, etc. In 1480 A. D., Vipradas (awarded with the title Ganraj Khan) wrote *Mansasch Mangalam*, which includes tales from *Puranas* and he also wrote his poetry in Bengali. The *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata* were translated in Bengali during this phase. Jaidev Nanda wrote *Padavali* lyrics⁷² Syed Murtaza, a Muslim poet, was also a composer of *Padavali*, which is a love story of Lord Krihna and Radha.⁷³ The merchant community also played a vital role in disseminating religion and culture. They carried the message of Islam from different corners of Asia and Africa. Before Muhammad Bakhtiyar Khiilji, Bengal had come into contact with some Muslim merchants, traders, sailors, and *Sufis* etc.⁷⁴ “In a Sanskrit inscription dated 1206 A.D., found near the city of Gauhati in Assam, the name *turaxka* (people of Turkic origin) was used for the Muslim forces in the area.” Moreover, a number of Medieval Muslim maritime accounts provide detailed descriptions of *Bahr al-Harkand* (Bay of Bengal), its tides, waves and currents, wind directions, island and other navigational details.” During 10th century, The Arab marchants made Chittagong ‘a great centre of their trade-in Bengal’.⁷⁵

In pre-Mughal Bengal society, based on religion, the Muslim jurists classified the non-believers into three categories- (a)*ahl-i-Kitab*, (b)*mushabahahl-i-Kitab*, (c)all other *kafirs* and *mushriks*.⁷⁶ “The Jurists agreed that all non-believers falling under the first two categories were entitled to equality in status and opportunities with the Musalmans provided they consented to pay *jiziyah*.”⁷⁷ Then, it was the duty of a Muslim state to protect their religion and places of worship. It is clear from *ChachNamah* that Muhammad bin Qasim “secured the status of *zimmis* for his Hindu subjects from the Caliph and accorded protection to their lives and property on the

receipt of *Jiziyah*.”⁷⁸ But the jews, Christians and Zoroastrians were under the category of *mushabah-ahl-i-kitab*. His example was followed by the turko-afghan rulers of Delhi in their dealings with the Hindus, who were accorded the status of *zimmi*.⁷⁹ Jadunath Sarkar writes, “The very term *zimmi* is an insulting title. It connotes political inferiority and helplessness like the status of a minor proprietor, perpetually under a guardian; such protected people could not claim equality with the citizens of the Muslim theocracy”.⁸⁰ Barani informs us that one day some of the leading scholars of the age went to see Sultan Mahmud and requested him to confront the Hindus with the alternative of ‘death or Islam’. But under the influence of his Wazir, Sultan did not agree with this proposal. Strangely, however, no other historian has referred to Barani’s statement.⁸¹ The Delhi Sultans were mostly concerned with the maintenance of their political power and prestige than with the religious problems or prejudices of their people. During the Sultanate period, the social and economic forces brought the two culture groups nearer and closer. For example, the use of *panor* beetle leaves. According to Barani, “a noble of Balban who was very fond of chewing *pan* (beetle leaves), a purely Indian habit.”⁸² The Hindus were mostly vegetarian, whereas the Muslims were non-vegetarian, but liquor and opium were consumed both by the Hindus and the Muslims. The people of Bengal ate different types of fish and used its fat (*taila*) for various purposes. Clothes made of silk, cotton and wool, were used by the people. Sack cloths mean sari made by jute, were worn by women of poor families. The use of spices for seasoning food became common, and standard Muslim dishes such as *pilau*, *khichri* etc., became popular.⁸³ Bharat Chandra, in his writing, described *kusumbha* as favourite food, prepared with opium and milk.⁸⁴ The popularity of music, its several complexions lighted the local atmosphere and patrons at the royal courts and *Khanqahs*. Though the Hindu women enjoyed a respectable

position in the family and participated in religious ceremonies, yet their position had deteriorated in society. The practise of polygamy was prevalent among the upper Hindu classes, similar to that of the Muslim society. Apart from the Sati system (mainly in Hindu society), another social evil, namely the *devadasi* system, was prevalent among the Hindus. Even Muslim women strictly observed *purdah* system. But women in both the society could divorce their husbands, remarry again and could claim their share in the paternal property.⁸⁵

The Muslim rule in the region is marked by two major achievements. In the first place, prior to the establishment of Muslim rule in this area, Bengal was an ever-shifting mosaic of principalities. The natural limits of Bengal were not clearly perceived until its political unification by the Ilyas Shahi rulers in the 14th century. Secondly, the political unity fashioned by the Muslim rulers also promoted linguistic homogeneity. Unlike their predecessors, the Muslim rulers were ardent patrons of the Bengali language and literature. The spread of Islam challenged the spiritual leadership of upper-caste Hindus who only patronized the Sanskrit language. The Muslim rule of Bengal contributed to economic polarization and cultural dichotomy. Most of the Muslim rulers either acted as agents of Delhi or tried to use Bengal as a stepping stone for attaining political authority in Delhi. Economic exploitation intensified during this period owing to the transfer of resources to northern India. The main victims of this exploitative system were locally converted Muslims and low caste Hindus. The sole aim of the Muslim rulers was to mobilize as many resources as possible.⁸⁶ The culture of Bengal reached its pinnacle under many ruling dynasties like the Hussein Shahi dynasty. In particular, the coming to power of Allauddin Hussein Shah ushered into the golden age of medieval Bengali history. During this period, the Bengali language and literature found patronage and subsequently

proliferated throughout the sultanate. During his time, non-Muslims Mainly Hindu) were appointed to high ranks within the administration. Like his wazir (Gopinath Basu), chief body-guards (Kesava Chhatri) etc.⁸⁷ The resulting confluence of Hindu-Muslim traditions in Medieval Bengal produced a spiritual custom of devotional singing, called *kirtan* (Vaishnava devotional poetry or music), as a means to both profess and transmit the love of god Krishna and Radha.⁸⁸ The practices of *kirtan*, *Baul*, *qawwali* and *zikr*⁸⁹ were unmistakably popularized. The court of Sultan Hussain Shah and the *sufis* of that time received the new religion favourably and allowed Sri Chaitanya to propagate it freely throughout the delta. It is possible that with its conceptual similarities to *sufism* as well as its emphasis on casteless equality, the spread of Gaur Vaishnavism actually helped the proliferation of *sufi* teaching, and eventually of Islam, in Bengal.⁹⁰

In Bengal, an older practice of worshipping the Goddess including martial Durga (one who ends all the miseries, the slayer of a demon named *durgama* meaning difficult to access; *durga* also means the protector of a fortress) image with ties to the Brahmanical pantheon have remained current throughout Bengal. The local Goddesses (like Durga, Chandi, Kali, Jagaddhatri) represent non-Brahmanical and, in some cases, anti-Brahmanical traditions. Their worship was very important in that time because they protected the village, locality and the family which worshipped them. For example, in Bankura district of Bengal, the village of Chhandor was associated with the goddess known as Jangalasini Devi; Lakhershole village with Kamakhya Devi; Naricha village with the deity Sarvamangala Devi; Ajodhya village with the deity known as Kaluburi and Raipur village with Ambika Devi. The forms of these local village Goddesses also differed considerably from standardized *Mahisamardini* Durga image by probably the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Thus,

in Bankura district and elsewhere, the goddess is worshipped in some places in her *Kokamukhi* or animal faced form, whereas Jangalasini Devi of Chandor village is represented as a stone which reposes under a tree, believed to be the sacred site of the Goddess. At the same time, the worship of deities such as Durga, Kali, Jagaddhatri, and Basanti is forbidden within a certain area surrounding the famous temple of Bargabhma Devi of Tamluk in the Midnapur district.⁹¹ During the Bengal Sultanate period, Raja Ganesh and Sultan Jalaluddin Mahumud proclaimed their association with the goddess by performing ritual worship and by issuing coins bearing symbols associated with this deity (goddess Chandi).⁹² Since non-Muslims continued to live in Bengal after the Muslim conquest, they must have continued to build their places of worship and use terra-cotta art for their decoration. The Muslims used vegetal or geometric forms; the non-Muslims combined these with figures. So, Islamic Bengal presented a number of temples, which constitute a new form of Muslim Medieval Bengal.

The history of religious architecture in Bengal can be divided into three periods- Early Hindu (up to the end of the twelfth century), Sultanate (fourteenth to early sixteenth centuries), and Hindu revival (sixteen to nineteenth centuries).⁹³ During the early Hindu period, Bengali temples were based on Mauryan and pre-Mauryan art of India, with themes being borrowed from the *Puranas* also. In addition, most of the decorations are typically Gupta in style. When Muslims came to India at the beginning of the 13th century, under Sikander Shah, Bengal became an independent entity for the first time and for the next two centuries, distinctive Bengali culture developed, which was evident in the literature and architecture of Bengal. By the end of the 16th century, a uniquely Bengali style of temples architecture and sculpture had established itself as the Hindu artistic expression of the new social, religious and

Cultural Revolution. From the pieces of evidence of the temples of the pre-Muslim period, it can be said that tall curviline arrehadeul temples were predominantly built (Siddheshvari temple at Barakar). This type of temples continued to be built till the end of the twelfth century with some additional features, such as increased height and complexity. A few examples of the latter are the dilapidated deuls situated in Satdeulia (Burdwan), Bahulara and Sonatapol (Bankura) or Deulghat (Purulia). During the Hindu period, religious changes in Bengal also brought some changes in temple architecture. Only rekha deul continues to be built in large numbers, but two entirely new styles- the hut style and the pinnacle style, began. The hut style was based on imitation of a common village house with attached roof, whereas the pinnacled style incorporated Islamic architectural features like domes, vaults, arches etc. They also took over the local features that were current in the mosques- curved cornices and terracotta decoration in low relief with prominent mouldings. A simple form of domestic hut design is referred to as *ek-bangla* or *ordo-chala* like Madan-Mohanabhoga-mandapaoras at Bishnupur. Two such huts, one as a porch in front of the other as shrine constitute as *jorbangla* or *char-chala* design in Keshta-Raya temple of Bishnupur. Most of the local deities in Bengal, which were worshipped in huts, were housed in brick temples copying their original form. If on the roof of a *char-chala* temple, a miniature temple is built, then the temple is called *at-chala*. The Shiva temple of Adampur and Raghavesvara temple of Diknagar are a few examples of this style.

Pinnacled or *ratna* style design temple emerged in the sixteenth-century and was a favourite style of a Malla king of Bishnupur. Here the roof is more or less flat and is surrounded by one or more towers or pinnacles called *ratna*. The most impressive example of *ek-ratna* temple (single central tower) is Madan-Mohan temple of

Bishnupur, and of the *panch-ratna* temple (five towers) is Shyamral temple in Bishnupur.⁹⁴ On the other hand, the construction of a large number of mosques in Bengal under the Sultanate rule changed the overall features of that region. The most important mosques under the Sultanate rule were Adina Mosque of Hazrat Pandua in West Bengal (1375 A.D.), the Mosque of Zafar Khan Ghazi in Tribeni (1298 A.D.), the Shait gumbaj Mosque in Bagerhat (mid-fifteenth century), the Darasbari Mosque in Rajshahi (1479 A.D.), the Choto Shona Mosque in Rajshahi (1493-1519 A.D.), the Binat Bibi Mosque in Dhaka (1457 A.D.), the Eklakhi Mausoleum in Hazrat Pandua, (1425 A.D, during the reign of Sultan Jallaluddin), the Gopalganj Mosque in Dinajpur (1460 A.D.during the reign of Barbak Shah) etc. In addition, glimpses of Sultanate houses can be also be found in the Iskander Nama of Nusrat Shah of Bengal. The monumental symbols of Islamic architecture like the minarets associated, pond or a large tank beside the mosque, inscriptions etc., have been used.⁹⁵ The construction of these mosques in Bengal indicated the changes taking place in Bengali society and the rapid spread of conversion to Islam.⁹⁶ There are indications that local *pirs* were responsible for the successful conversion of the vast majority of the population (mainly from rural) of Bengal, because Vaisnavism “had lost their influence over the society at that time.”⁹⁷

In Bengal, by the influence of the indigenous tantric yogic cult, Sufism had been changed into several forms. *Pirism*, one of its (Sufism) form, fostered Hindu-Muslim syncretism in Bengal during the Medieval period.⁹⁸ In Bengal, the *Pirs*, who observed the rules laid down by *Shariat* were known as *Ba-Sharaor Dighal-duri-Pir* or *Lokveda-Pongthi*. On the other hand, those who destroyed the regulations based on *Shariat* and gave much importance on practice of meditation, prayer, individual thought and took a kind of intoxicating drug or liquor, were known as *Be-Shara* or

Be-duri or *Anavou-sach-Pongthi*.⁹⁹ It was from this time that the Pir-mangal songs, worship of *Panch Pir* became popular when the power of Ban bibi and Gazi baba was famous as supernatural, to give relief to the poor etc. Here, the name of Ghazi (Probably Bara Khan Ghazi of Satgaon) was associated with the *Panch Pir*.¹⁰⁰ It was common among Hindus to offer Shirni (*Shirini*) or offering at the *Dargah* of the Muslim *Pirs*, sing the song of Pir Baba, Satya Pir, Panch Pir during the time of pestilence in Medieval Bengal.¹⁰¹ In praise of Ghazi Pir, a poet wrote, “You are Brahma, you are Vishnu, and you are Narayan/ Listen, O Ghazi, pay heed to yourself to preaching in the assembly (i.e. instead of fighting).”¹⁰²

¹Quoted by Roy, Atul Chandra, *History of Bengal (Mughal Period: 1526-1765 A.D)*, Calcutta: Nababharat Publishers, 1968, p. 468.

²Richard M. Eaton, N. H. Ansari and S. H. Qasemi, Bengal, *Encyclopedia Iranica*, Vol. IV, www.iranicaonline.org, retrieved on 15th December, 1989.

³Majumdar, R.C., ed. *The History of Bengal (Hindu Period)*, Dacca: University of Dacca, 1913, p. 15.

⁴Chatterjee, Anjali, *Bengal in the Reign of Aurangzeb (1658-1707 A.D)*, Calcutta: Progressive, 1967, pp. 1-2.

⁵Chattopadhyaya, Annapurna, “Diverse Ethno-Cultural Trends in Ancient Bengal: A study of Processes of Acculturation” in *Proceedings of the Indian History Congress*, 65, 2004, p. 33.

⁶Abul Fazl, *Ain-i Akbari*, trans. H. S. Jarrett, Vol. II, Calcutta: Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal, 1949, p.132.

⁷Ghulam Husain Salim, *Riyazu-S-Salatin (A History of Bengal)*, trans. Maulavi Abdus Salam, Calcutta: Asiatic Society, 1902, p. 20.

⁸Eaton, Richard M., *The Rise of Islam and the Bengal Frontier: 1204-1760*, London: University of California Press, 1993, pp. 9-10.

⁹Ibid, p. 10.

¹⁰Majumdar, ed. *The History of Bengal (Hindu Period)*, p. 412, 415. Also see Sen, Dinesh Chandra, *History of Bengali Language and Literature* (A series of lectures delivered as Reader to the Calcutta University), Calcutta: Published by the University, 1911, pp. 2-4.

¹¹*Kulinism (Hindu Caste Rules)*, www.britannica.com, retrieved on 11thFeb, 2020. Chatterjee, Kumkum, “Communities, Kings and Chronicles: The Kulagranthas of Bengal” in *Studies in History*, 21 (173), 2005, pp. 174-75. *Kulinism*, in Hinduism, introduced by Raja Ballala Sena of Bengal, name derives from the Sanskrit word *kulina* (of good family). A person possessing the elite status was described as *kulin*.

¹²Chatterjee, Kumkum, “Communities, Kings and Chronicles: The Kulagranthas of Bengal” in *Studies in History*, p. 183.

¹³Ibid, pp. 400-401.

¹⁴Eaton, *The Rise of Islam and the Bengal Frontier: 1204-1760*, p. 13.

¹⁵Ibid, p. 13.

¹⁶Majumdar, ed. *The History of Bengal (Hindu Period)*, pp. 405. Also see, Eaton, *The Rise of Islam and the Bengal Frontier: 1204-1760*, p. 14.

¹⁷Chatterjee, Kumkum, “Goddess Encounters: Mughals, Monsters and the Goddess in Bengal”, *Modern Asian Studies*, 47 (5), 2013, pp. 1440-45.

¹⁸Ibid, p. 1445.

¹⁹Majumdar, *The History of Bengal (Hindu Period)*, p. 402.

²⁰Wise, James, *Notes on the Races, Castes, and Trades of Eastern Bengal*, London: Harrison and Sons, 1883, pp. 5-6.

²¹Eaton, *The Rise of Islam and the Bengal Frontier: 1204-1760*, p. 101. Also see, *Islam, Bengal*, en.banglapedia.org, retrieved on 10th June, 2014.

²²Eaton, *The Rise of Islam and the Bengal Frontier: 1204-1760*, p. 101.

²³Majumdar, *The History of Bengal (Hindu Period)*, pp. 625-30. Also see, Chatterjee, Kumkum, “Communities, Kings and Chronicles: The Kulagranthas of Bengal” in *Studies in History*, pp. 174-176.

²⁴Chatterjee, “Communities, Kings and Chronicles: The Kulagranthas of Bengal” in *Studies in History*, p.176.

²⁵Basu, Nagendra nath, *Banger Jatia Itihasa (History of VarendraBrahmana)*, Calcutta: Asiatic Society of Bengal, 1334, p. 32.

²⁶Chatterjee, “Communities, Kings and Chronicles: The Kulagranthas of Bengal” in *Studies in History*, p.176.

²⁷Majumdar, *The History of Bengal (Hindu Period)*, pp. 579-89. Also see, Chaterjee, “Communities, Kings and Chronicles: The Kulagranthas of Bengal” in *Studies in History*, p.185. 190.

²⁸Chatterjee, “Communities, Kings and Chronicles: The Kulagranthas of Bengal” in *Studies in History*, p.190.

²⁹Abdullah Al-Ahsan, “Spread of Islam in Pre-Mughal Bengal” in *Intellectual Discourse*, 2 (1), 1994, p. 45.

³⁰Sen, *History of Bengali Language and Literature*, p. 7.

³¹Ibid.

³²Abdullah Al-Ahsan, “Spread of Islam in Pre-Mughal Bengal” in *Intellectual Discourse*, p. 46.

³³Pandit, Ramai, *Shunya Puran*, Calcutta: Bangia Sahhitya Parishad, 1907, pp. 140-41. See also, Sen, *History of Bengali Language and Literature*, pp. 36-37.

³⁴Majumdar, ed. *History of Bengal (Hindu Period)*, p. VII.

³⁵*Ain-iAkbari*, tr. H. S. Jarrett, Vol. II, pp. 126-127.

³⁶Sharma, Sri Ram, *The Religious Policy of the Mughal Emperors*, London: Asia Publishing House, 1940, p.1.

³⁷*Ain-iAkbari*, tr.H. S. Jarrett, Vol. II, pp. 161.

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- ³⁸Riyazu-S-Salatin (*A History of Bengal*), tr. Maulavi Abdus Salam, pp. 113-15. Also see, Abdullah Al-Ahsan, "Spread of Islam in Pre-Mughal Bengal" in *Intellectual Discourse*, pp. 47-48.
- ³⁹Riyazu-S-Salatin (*A History of Bengal*), tr. Maulavi Abdus Salam, p. 117. Also see, Sarkar, Jadunath, *The History of Bengal: Muslim Period (1200-1757)*, Vol. II, The University of Dacca, Ramna, Dacca, 1948, p. 127.
- ⁴⁰Riyazu-S-Salatin (*A History of Bengal*), tr. Maulavi Abdus Salam, p. 116.
- ⁴¹Sarkar, *The History of Bengal: Muslim Period (1200-1757)*, Vol. II, p. 127.
- ⁴²Ibid, pp. 127-28. Also see, *Riyazu-S-Salatin (A History of Bengal)*, tr. Maulavi Abdus Salam, p. 116.
- ⁴³Riyazu-S-Salatin (*A History of Bengal*), tr. Maulavi Abdus Salam, p. 118. Also see, Abdullah Al-Ahsan, "Spread of Islam in Pre-Mughal Bengal" in *Intellectual Discourse*, p. 48.
- ⁴⁴Robins, Nick, *The Corporation that Changed the World*, London: Pluto Press, 2nd Edition 2012, p. 64. *Riyaz-us-Salatin* described Bengal as *Jannat-ul-Balad* or 'Paradise of Towns'. See, *Riyazu-S-Salatin (A History of Bengal)*, tr. Maulavi Abdus Salam, p. 4.
- ⁴⁵Eaton, *The Rise of Islam and the Bengal Frontier: 1204-1760*, p.137.
- ⁴⁶Wise, *Notes on the Races, Castes, and Trades of Eastern Bengal*, pp. 3-5. Also see, Eaton, *The Rise of Islam and the Bengal Frontier: 1204-1760*, pp. 56-57.
- ⁴⁷Wise, *Notes on the Races, Castes, and Trades of Eastern Bengal*, p. 6.
- ⁴⁸Beverley, H., *Report on the Census of Bengal*, Calcutta: Bengal Secretariat Press, 1872, p. 132.
- ⁴⁹Eaton, *The Rise of Islam and the Bengal Frontier: 1204-1760*, p. 120-21.
- ⁵⁰Ibid, p. 124. Also see, Fuzli, Rubbee Khondkar, *The Origin of the Musalmans of Bengal*, Calcutta: Thacker, Spink and Co. 1895, pp. 63, 71.
- ⁵¹Riyazu-S-Salatin (*A History of Bengal*), tr. Maulavi Abdus Salam, p. 118.

⁵²Halder, Gopal, *Bangla Shahittyer Ruprekha*, Vol. I, Calcutta: A. Mukherjee and Co. Lmt., 1954, p. 42. Also see, Abdullah Al-Ahsan, “Spread of Islam in Pre-Mughal Bengal” in *Intellectual Discourse*, p. 48.

⁵³Abdullah Al-Ahsan, “Spread of Islam in Pre-Mughal Bengal” in *Intellectual Discourse*, p. 49.

⁵⁴Ibid. Also see, Haq, Enamul Muhammad, *A history of Sufi-ism in Bengal*, Asiatic Society of Bangladesh, 1975, pp. 228-242.

⁵⁵Abdullah Al-Ahsan, “Spread of Islam in Pre-Mughal Bengal” in *Intellectual Discourse*, p. 49.

⁵⁶Haq, *A history of Sufi-ism in Bengal*, p. 233. Also see, Alam, Ishrat and Syed Ejaz Hussain, eds. *The Varied Facets of History: Essays in Honour of Aniruddha Ray*, New Delhi: Primus Books, 2011, p. 133.

⁵⁷ Dey, Amit, “Sufism and Society in Medieval India (Debates in Indian History and Society Series) by Raziuddin Aquil” in *Social Scientist*, 39 (5/6), 2011, p. 94.

⁵⁸Abdullah Al-Ahsan, “Spread of Islam in Pre-Mughal Bengal” in *Intellectual Discourse*, p. 49.

⁵⁹Rahim, Abur Muhammad, *Social and Cultural History of Bengal (1201-1576)*, Vol. I, London: 1959, p. 83.

⁶⁰ Ibid, pp. 85-86. Also see, Abdullah Al-Ahsan, “Spread of Islam in Pre-Mughal Bengal” in *Intellectual Discourse*, p. 49.

⁶¹Wise, *Notes on the Races, Castes, and Trades of Eastern Bengal*, pp. 10-11.

⁶²Al-Masumi, M. Saghir Hasan, “Bangal’s Contribution to Islamic Learning-I” in *Islamic Studies*, 6 (2), June 1967, p. 158.

⁶³Law, Narendra Nath, *Promotion of Learning in India during Muhammadan Rule*, London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1916, pp. 105-08.

⁶⁴Haq, *A history of Sufi-ism in Bengal*, pp. 245-54.

⁶⁵Alam, Ishrat and Syed Ejaz Hussain, eds. *The Varied Facets of History: Essays in Honour of Aniruddha Ray*, p. 135. Also see, Al-Ahsan, Abdullah, “Spread of Islam in Pre-Mughal Bengal” in *Intellectual Discourse*, p. 50. Meaning missionary, word found in a letter written in Persian by Mir Sayyid Ashraf Jahangir Simnani to Sultan Ibrahim Sharqi of Jounpur.

⁶⁶Al-Ahsan, Abdullah, “Spread of Islam in Pre-Mughal Bengal” in *Intellectual Discourse*, p. 50.

⁶⁷Alam, Ishrat and Syed Ejaz Hussain, eds. *The Varied Facets of History: Essays in Honour of Aniruddha Ray*, p. 125.

⁶⁸Ibid, p. 83. See also, Al-Ahsan, Abdullah, “Spread of Islam in Pre-Mughal Bengal” in *Intellectual Discourse*, p. 51 and Rahim, *Social and Cultural History of Bengal (1201-1576)*, Vol. I, p. 172.

⁶⁹Alam, Ishrat and Syed Ejaz Hussain, eds. *The Varied Facets of History: Essays in Honour of Aniruddha Ray*, p. 133.

⁷⁰Al-Ahsan, Abdullah, “Spread of Islam in Pre-Mughal Bengal” in *Intellectual Discourse*, p. 51.

⁷¹Sen, Dinesh Chandra, *The Folk-Literature of Bengal*, University of Calcutta, 1920, p. 100.

⁷²Nanda, J. N, *Bengal: The Unique State*, New Delhi: Concept Publishing Company, 2005, p. 43. Also see, Law, *Promotion of Learning in India during Muhammadan Rule*, p. 107.

⁷³Ibid, pp. 43.

⁷⁴Siddique, *Epigraphy and Islamic Culture: Inscriptions of the Early Muslim Rulers of Bengal (1205-1494)*, pp.10-11.

⁷⁵Ibid, pp. 11-12. Also see, Rahim, *Social and Cultural History of Bengal (1201-1576)*, Vol. I, p. 43.

⁷⁶Nizami, *Some Aspects of Religion and Politics in India during the Thirteenth Century*, p. 308.

⁷⁷Ibid.

⁷⁸Mehta, J. L., *Advanced Study in the History of Medieval India*, Vol. III, New Delhi: Sterling Private Limited, Reprint 2012, p. 50.

⁷⁹Ibid, pp. 49-50.

⁸⁰Ibid, p. 50.

⁸¹Habib, Mohammad, *The political theory of the Delhi Sultanate (Including a translation of Ziauddin Barani's Fatawa-I Jahandari, Circa, 1358-59 A.D.)*, Allahabad: Kitab Mahal, p. 6.

⁸²Nizami, *Some Aspects of Religion and Politics in India during the Thirteenth Century*, p. 324.

⁸³Majumdar, ed. *The History of Bengal (Hindu Period)*, pp. 611-12. Also see, Rahim, *Social and Cultural History of Bengal (1201-1576)*, Vol. I, pp. 357-59.

⁸⁴Sen, *History of Bengali Language and Literature*, p.390.

⁸⁵Rahim, *Social and Cultural History of Bengal (1201-1576)*, Vol.I, p. 285, 360. Also see, Majumdar, ed. *The History of Bengal (Hindu Period)*, pp. 609-11.

⁸⁶Eaton, *The Rise of Islam and the Bengal Frontier: 1204-1760*, p. 16.

⁸⁷Sarkar, *The History of Bengal (Muslim Period: 1200-1757 A.D.)*, p. 151.

⁸⁸Sarbadhikary, Sukanya, *Place of Devotion: Siting and Experiencing Divinity in Bengal-Vaishnavism*, University of California, 2015, p. 11. Eaton, *The Rise of Islam and the Bengal Frontier: 1204-1760*, p. 111.

⁸⁹Aquil, Raziuddin, *Days in the Life of a Sufi*, New Delhi: Pan Macmillan Publisher, 2020, p. Introduction. The former is a Sufi Music and latter is a devotional music continuing the name of Allah. Both are the major source of confrontation between Ulama and Sufis.

⁹⁰Haq, *A history of Sufi-ism in Bengal*, p. 237.

⁹¹Chatterjee, Kumkum, *Goddess encounters: Mughals, Monsters and the Goddess in Bengal*, *Modern Asian Studies*, pp. 1139-44.

⁹²Sarkar, *History of Bengal (Muslim Period: 1200-1757 A.D.)*, p. 128.

⁹³Mangaonkar, Priyanka, *Temples of Bengal: Material Style and Technological Evolution*, chitrolekha.com, retrieved on 1st March 2013.

⁹⁴Ibid.

⁹⁵Hasan, Perween, “Sultanate Mosques and Continuity in Bengal Architecture” in *An Annual on Visual Culture of the Islamic World*, 6, 1989, pp. 58-63.

⁹⁶Ibid, p. 58.

⁹⁷Rahaman, Md. Shah Noorur, “Religious and Cultural Syncretism in Medieval Bengal”, *The Nehu Journal*, 16 (1), January-June, 2018, p. 56.

⁹⁸Ibid, p. 55.

⁹⁹Sen, Kshitimohan, *Bharatiya Madhya yuge Sadhanaaar Dhara*, Calcutta University Press, 1930, p. 25, 28.

¹⁰⁰Sarkar, *Islam in Bengal (Thirteenth to Nineteenth Century)*, p. 31. Also see, Rahim, *Social and Cultural History of Bengal (1201-1576)*, Vol. I, p. 337.

¹⁰¹Rahman, Md. Shah Noorur, “Religious and Cultural Syncretism in Medieval Bengal” in *The Nehu Journal*, p. 59. Also see, Rahim, *Social and Cultural History of Bengal (1201-1576)*, Vol. I, p. 334.

¹⁰²Rahman, Md. Shah Noorur, “Religious and Cultural Syncretism in Medieval Bengal” in *TheNehu Journal*, p. 58.

CHAPTER- V

Mughal Bengal: Implications of the Imperial Orders (1556-1707 A. D.)

There is a marked distinction between the religion and society of ancient Bengal and those under the Muslims rule, mainly in the Mughal rule. The principles of Islam are strictly guided by the injunctions of the Quran and a few other scriptures, with the result that throughout the world, there is a fundamental unity of Islamic beliefs and practices. The Mughal era in Bengal's history effectively began with this theory. It is interesting to note in the studies on the Mughal rule in India, however, that though the Mughal rulers claimed to act as agents of Islam theoretically, but in practice followed their own track. Like, the paternal and elaborate religious and political principles of Akbar and his successors (mainly Jahangir and Shah Jahan) prepared the base to achieve 'universal peace' (*sulh-i-kul*) by using special orders and own special prerogatives. The Mughal court and Empire was a blending of Persian, Islamic and Indian cultures. The Mughal Emperors exhibited religious tolerance to a great extent. Abul Fazl loftily wrote, when Akbar was started his era in Bengal *suba*, "The words of the world-cherishing prince came into operation. The Divine graciousness increased daily. The tongue of words and the tongue of acts joined in calling for thanks giving."¹ Akbar declared, "No man should be interfered with on account of religion, and anyone is to be allowed to go over to a religion that pleases him".² Akbar explained meditation and deep faith was the only way to communicate with God (He is the real doer). Here subservient emulation or *taqlid* of traditional practices was not needed for a true believer.³ According to Abul Fazl, "It is my duty to be in good understanding with all men. If they walk in the way of God's will (*riza*), interference

with them would be itself reprehensible; and if otherwise, they are under the malady of ignorance and deserve my compassion.”⁴ True to what he said, his words or actions never discredited any religion of any communities, and all his actions promoted tolerance and harmony. He did not force *Shariat* on the non-Muslims of his Empire. He allowed his conquered people to apply the laws of their own religion to their area. Akbar banned activities offensive to the Hindus, such as cow slaughter in all the provinces; issued an order to abolish discriminatory taxes such as those levied on Hindu pilgrims; ordered the translation of Sanskrit and Bengali Hindu sacred texts and epics into the Persian language, gave importance on Hindu *dharma* and celebrated Hindu festivals. On the other hand, the actions of Aurangzeb were prompted by social, political and economic reasons, and religion was used merely to justify them at a time when the Emperor desired of improving his relationship with the orthodoxy. Reversing the tolerant religious policy of his forefather, Aurangzeb made the lives of heretical Muslims as well as other religious groups a living incubus.⁵

The Mughals, after conquering Bengal, appointed several *Subehdars* for the consolidation of Mughal political authority. So the role of the provincial governors or Mughal *Subehdars* in disseminating imperial orders and culture in Bengal is significant. The fact remains, however, that the religious influence upon the Hindu population of Bengal province varied in accordance with the ruler’s charisma. According to Abul Fazl, the Mughal Empire under Akbar was divided into fifteen administrative units known as *Subas*, viz., Delhi, Agra, Ajmer, Lahore, Kabul, Multan, Ahmedabad, Ahmednagar, Malwa, Khandesh, Berar, Allahabad, Oudh, Bihar and Bengal. Akbar placed a governor or *Subehdar* in charge of each province or *Suba*. The latter was accountable to the Emperor for the maintenance of peace and order

within the *Suba*.⁶ During the Mughal period, '*Kaghazi raj*' means government by the document. It was a practice to send all official records to the office of the *Diwan* for inspection. Such records were also stored in the 'Public Record Office' under his control. A Mughal Record office was situated close to the Emperor's place (*Mahal-i-Khas*) at Fatehpur Sikri. The records inspected by the *Diwan*'s office on a regular basis were mostly the records of funds (*tahvils*) classified under two groups- *Siaha* (daily ledger or account book of receipt and disbursement) and *Awarija* (abstracts). These two were further sub divided into 23 and 47 sub-groups of record items. Apart from the records office, Shah Jahan and Aurangzeb had issued official handbooks (*Dastur-ul-amls*), which contained the rules and regulations of the Mughals. As regards the administration of the provinces (*subas*), it needs to be mentioned that the *Subehdars* arranged their records at the end of each season or year according to established custom and usual practice and sent them to the Central Record Office.⁷

The Mughals, mainly from Akbar, sought to conjoin several religious and ethnic people in their conquered provinces into a single political system through the office of the *Subehdar*. The term *Subehdar* is derived from the Arabic word *sub* meaning direction or point of the compass. The essential duties of the *Subehdar* were to maintain law and order, to help in revenue collection and to execute the royal decrees and regulations sent issued from time to time.⁸ Akbar first instituted the practice of issuing a 'Procedure Code' from time to time, which was strictly observed by the *Subehdar* and "they were not permitted to deviate from or infringe them even by a hair-breadth."⁹ According to Ghulam Husain Salim, "The Procedure Code or Manual contained a set of rules and regulations on all the revenue and administrative affairs, was called in Persian *Dastur-ul-'Amal*. It was issued to all Provincial Governors, Administrators, and officials after being personally approved by the Emperor himself,

and every year modifications or addition were made to it with the Emperor's approval."¹⁰ Jahangir's *farman* to Islam Khan in Bengal, for example, contained a set of rules bears. Islam Khan prepared a high platform, higher than the height of two men and constructed a small house on it. It was known as '*jharuka*'. Jahangir issued a seventeen point *farman* and fixed up the duties and responsibilities of all the *Subehdars*, including Bengal. The said *farman* also cited Akbar's advice to Muzaffar Khan, Raja Todar mal and Raja Man Singh, Shah Jahan's advice to Qasim Khan and Aurangzeb's advice to Mir Jumla and Shaista Khan, etc. for reference.¹¹ Here the elaborated religious, social and cultural policies of Akbar and other Mughal rulers protected their individual authority in Bengal as well as other conquered provinces compared with the other Muslim rulers, and indirectly, it made different historiography of Bengal under the Mughal dominance. For example, "Akbar presented himself to his subjects in the radiant glow of an Indian Maharaja, appearing in the public audience (*darbar*) seated on a raised platform (*jharokha*) in the manner in which traditional Indian Kings or images of Hindu deities were presented for public viewing(*darsan*)."¹² "When the *Padshah* appeared at the *Jhorokha* window of the palace every morning....crowds of Hindus assembled, determined to begin the day auspiciously with the sight of Vishnu's vice-regent on the earth".¹³ In accordance with the Mughal traditions in the conquered province like Dhaka, Islam khan "...prepared a high platform higher than the height of two men and constructed a small house on it. It was named *jharuka*",¹⁴ which followed the Imperial tradition. Eaton had given a piece of information about Islam Khan's *Jhorokha darsan*- "Located in the inner garden adjoining of the governor's palace, his *jhorokha* consists of a window and enclosed space built on a platform elevated some twelve feet above the ground. Behind the window and raised above those in the garden below, the seated governor

received those admitted for a private or public audience or *darbar*.¹⁵ There had a reference about an Imperial camp arranged by Mirza Nathan after their victory in Bengal. Under that circumstances, for the safety of all, Nathan takes an oath from the beginning. That particular oath was addressed to different deities according to their (other members) own identities.¹⁶ Like, "...the Quran ammonite, for the Muslims and the *Shalgram* (fossil ammonite, worshipped by the Hindus as a symbol of Visnu) for the Hindus were brought to the assembly." Thus Mirza Nathan started his oath, placing the Quran in his hand.¹⁷ Soit cleared that Mughal officers did not perceive Islam as the state religion in Bengal.

The Mughal rulers, especially Akbar, paid much attention to administrative reforms in Bengal through imperial regulations. Badauni, for example, states that as Akbar followed a liberal tract instead of Islamic norms, he (the Emperor) declared on 987 A.H. or 1579 A.D. "Whereas Hindustan has now become the Centre of security and peace, and the land of justice and beneficence, a large number of people, especially learned men and lawyers, had immigrated and chosen this country for their home. Now we, the principal Ulamas, who are not only well versed in the several Departments of the law and in the principles of jurisprudence, and well acquainted with the edicts which rest on reason or testimony, but also known for our piety and honest intentions, had duly considered the deep meaning, first, of the verse of the Quran, "*Obey God, and Obey the prophet, and those who have authority among you.*" And secondly, of the genuine tradition, "*Surely the man who is dearest to God on the day of judgment, is the Imam i-'adil: whosoever obeys the Amir, obeys Me; and whosoever rebels against him, rebels against Me*", and thirdly, of several other proofs based on reasoning or testimony; and we have agreed that the rank of a *Sultan i' Adil* (just ruler) is higher in the eyes of God than the rank of a *Mujtahid*. Further we

declare the King of Islam, Amir of the Faithful, Shadow of God in the World, *Abul Fath Jalaluddin Muhammad Akbar Padshah ghazi*, whose kingdom God perpetuate, is a most just, a most wise, and a most God-fearing king.....Further, we declare that, should His Majesty think fit to issue a new order, we and the nation shall likewise be bound by it, provided always that such an order be not only in accordance with the same verse of the Quran, but also the real benefit of the nation; and further that an opposition on the part of the subjects on such an order as passed by His Majesty, shall involve damnation in the world to come, and loss of religion and property in this life.... This Document has been written with honest intentions, for the glory of the God, and the propagation of the Islam, and is signed by us, the principal Ulamas, and lawyers in the month of Rajab of the 987 of the *Hijrah*. ” “No sooner had His Majesty obtained the legal instrument, than the road of deciding any religious question was open; the superiority of intellect of the Imam was established, and opposition was rendered impossible. All orders regarding things which our law allows or disallows were abolished, and the superiority of the intellect of the Imam became law”.¹⁸

In Bengal, Akbar issued several orders from the year 990-995 A.H. or 1582-86 A.D.- “No one was to marry more than one wife, except in cases of barrenness; but in all other cases the rule was, ‘One God, and one wife’. Women, on reaching the limit of their period of fertility, when their course stop, should no longer wish for the husband. If widows liked to remarry, they might do so, though this was against the ideas of the Hindus. A Hindu girl whose husband had died before the marriage was consummated should not be burnt. If, however, the Hindus thought this a hardship, they should not be prevented (from burning the girl); but then a Hindu widow should take the girl...”¹⁹ In yet another order related to the *Din-i-Ilahi* it was conveyed, “If disciples meet each other, one should say ‘*Allahu-Akbar*’, and other should respond ‘*Jalla-*

Jallalu-hu' instead of our *Salam*.”²⁰ According to Abul Fazl, the motive behind this mode of salutation was to remind men to think of the origin of their existence and to keep the deity in fresh, lively, and grateful remembrance.²¹ Here he used the phrase *Hazrat Shahanshahi* for his Majesty, ‘King of Kings’.²² Another order stated, “The beginning of counting Hindu months should be the 28th days, and not the 16th because the latter was the invention and invocation of Bikramajit. The Hindu feasts, likewise, were to take place in accordance with this rule.”²³ Not only in Bengal, one of the orders of Akbar extended throughout his Empire was, “Common people should no longer learn Arabic because such people were generally the cause of much mischief.”²⁴ So the prohibition of the study of Arabic was extended to all. According to Badauni, reading and learning Arabic was looked upon as a crime, and some alphabets of Arabic such as *sad*, *zad*, *ain*, etc., were altogether avoided.²⁵ Another imperial order read, “Cases related to the Hindus should be decided by learned Brahmins, and not by Musalman Qazis. If it were necessary to have recourse to oaths, they should put heated irons into the hands of the accused; who was guilty if his hands were burnt, but innocent if not; or they should put the hands of the accused into hot, liquid butter; or the accused should jump into water, and if he came to the surface before an arrow had returned to the ground, which had been shot off when the man jumped into the water, he was guilty.”²⁶ Moreover, the killing of animals on certain days was forbidden in the first eighteen days of the month of *Farwardin*; the whole month in which Akbar was born (*Aban*), and on Sundays, as it was sacred to the sun etc. In company with Hindu libertines and princesses of the *harem*, beef was interdicted, and to touch beef was defiling, said Akbar, as the Hindus looked upon cow as a holy thing. To discontinue the use of meat, Akbar extended several types of fasts during a year over six months and even more, and capital and provincial

punishment were inflicted on everyone who acted against the declaration. And finally, in 999 A.H. or 1590 A.D., the flesh of oxen, buffaloes, goats, horses, camels were banned.²⁷ In 1000 A.H. or 1591 A.D. order on “The custom of shaving off the beard was introduced.”²⁸ In 1002 A.H. or 1593 A.D., another order stated, “If a woman was older than her husband by twelve years, he should not lie with her, and if a young girl was found running about town, whether veiled or not, or if a woman was bad, or quarreled with her husband, she should be sent to quarter to the prostitutes, to do there what she liked.”²⁹ The imperial order of 1004 A.H. or 1595 A.D. stated- “Should a Hindu woman fall in love with a Mohammadan, and be converted to Islam, she should be taken away by force and handed over to her family; but so should also a Musalman woman, who had fallen in love with a Hindu, be prevented from joining Hinduism.” The object of the order was evidently to prevent a woman from doing what she liked, for according to Muhammadans, women were looked upon as *naqicul’aql*.³⁰

Akbar adopted a secular education policy, which, in due course of time, was implemented in Bengal through the *Subehdars*. According to Abul Fazl, in every country, including Hindustan, boys were kept in school for years where they learnt the consonants and vowels. A great portion of the life of the students was wasted by making them read many books. In this regard, Akbar’s order read, “... every school boy should first learn to write the letters of the alphabet and also learn to trace their several forms (boys in the east generally learn to write by running their pens). He ought to learn the shape and name of each letter, which may be done in two days; when the boys should proceed to write the joint letters. They may be practised for a week, after which the boys should learn some prose and poetry by heart, and then commit to memory some verses in praise of God or moral sentences, each written separately. Care is to be taken that he learns to understand everything himself; but the

teacher may assist him a little. He then ought for some time, to be daily practised in writing a hemistich or a verse, will soon acquire a current hand. The teacher ought especially to look after five things; knowledge of letters, meanings of words, the hemistich, the verse, the former lesson. If this method of teaching be adopted, a boy will learn in a month, or even a day what it took others years to understand, so much that people will be quite astonished.”³¹ During a period of confusion and dispersion of rebels in Bengal, Akbar ordered to Shahbaz Khan in his 1591 A.D., a book called the Mahabharat, a collection of stories of the Brahmanas, be translated into Persian, and in accordance with the order, it was translated as Razm-nama (the Book of War).³² Akbar also made an attempt to secularize the teaching process throughout India, encouraging the Hindus to join the ranks of Persian teachers in the state-run *madrassas*. “One healthy change, a faint beginning of which was made in the time of SikandarLodhi, continued during thereign of Akbar. It was that Hindu students began to be admitted into the *maktabs* and *madrassas*. The result was that within half a century, there was a large number of Hindu scholars, historians and poets of Persian, and some of these excelled in rational sciences and were appointed teachers of the Persian language in the *madrassas*. There are thus secular biases imparted to education in the time of Akbar”.³³ Akbar introduced the system of grant-in-aid to the educational institutions of the Hindus. He encouraged the Muslim scholars to study Sanskrit and Hindi and translate the religious as well as secular literature of the Hindus into the Persian language for the benefit of the Muslims. Akbar issued some orders against evil practices, which continued in Bengali society as like sati, where widows, mainly from higher classes like Brahmins. “He prohibited the burning of Hindu widows on the funeral pyre of their husbands...”³⁴ “If a Hindu woman wished to be burnt with husband, they should not prevent her, but she should not be forced

against her will.”³⁵ Akbar appointed truthful and vigilant men in every city and district in order that the two classes of cases might be continually kept distinct and that forcible burning might not be permitted.³⁶ According to Monserrate wrote, “I do not think Akbar ever countenanced the inhuman practice of Sati.”³⁷

Akbar issued an ordinance in 1002 A.H. or 1593 A.D. that “wine could be taken on medical grounds and on the advice of the physician alone. Punishment would be meted out to those who indulged in excessive drinking carousals and disorderly conduct.” Then the Emperor ordered a wine shop to be set up near the Mughal palace. “Persons who visited to purchase wine as a remedy for sickness, could do so by having their name, and that of their father and grandfather, written down by the clerk.”³⁸ Sebastuen Manrique, who visited India during the reign of Shah Jahan, did not find in Bengal any vineyards and hence no grape wine.³⁹ “At the time of famines and distress, parents were allowed to sell their children, but they might again buy them, if they acquired means to repay their price.”⁴⁰ The issue of child marriage was brought up when Adham Khan wanted to marry a girl half his age. This incident infuriated Akbar so much that he changed the marriage laws. He had passed a law that stated that no boy below the age of 16 and no girl below the age of 14 can marry. What’s more, he had passed the law wherein consent of the bride, and the bridegroom was necessary for any marriage to take place. Also, according to AbulFazl, marriage between near relations was highly improper, and Akbar banned it through his regulations. “It was forbidden to marry one’s cousin or near relation, because in such cases the sexual appetite is but small.”⁴¹ During the interval of comparative leisure which Akbar enjoyed in 1575 and 1576, after his victorious return from Patna, he paid much attention to certain administrative reforms for Bengal. The regulations about the branding of horses belonging to the government were introduced by Shahbaz Khan

for the prevention of fraud. Even Akbar obtained a favourable impression of the Christian character and religion on learning of the two Jesuits missionary priests Anthony Vaz and Peter Dias, who recently arrived in Bengal.⁴² Pedro Tavares arrived in Satgaon a little later. Akbar was highly impressed with his conduct and granted him a *farman* to preach the Christian faith openly, to erect churches and to baptize those natives who willingly accepted Christianity.⁴³ Under the royal authority, the *Subehdars* of Bengal promoted Muslim Institutions such as *madrassas* and *masjids* through endowments and issued orders for land grants such as *madad-i-ma'ash*. Inscription at Bahram Saqq Shrine, dated 1015 A.H. or 1606-07 A.D. provided the information regarding grants such as *imams* to *sufis*, *ulama*, poor and destitute commoners who attended mosques, *madrassas* and *Khanqahs* regularly.⁴⁴

Akbar issued tax-free grants in many parts of Bengal entitled *wajh-i-ma'ash*, *milk*, *wazifah* and *in'am*.⁴⁵ One of the orders renewed and social processes set since 1666 A.D. as "Charity Sunnuds" was issued by Chittagong Revenue Department in the name of Mughal Ruler to the petty clerks (*mutasuddi*). It was mentioned that "...granted tax free lands directly to the trustees (*mutawali*) of mosque or shrines and guaranteed that the grantee's heirs would continue to enjoy such grants."⁴⁶ Mughal authorities granted tax-free land in the forest area to pioneer in Chittagong for several purposes. For example, cleaning forests, establishing permanent agricultural settlements etc. These included grants to the trustees of mosques, shrines (*dargahs*) of Muslim Holy man, trustees of Hindu temples, Brahmin communities related to any type of religious work (From 1582 to 1638 A.D.).⁴⁷ All of these land grants were renewed and socialised. An example was found in a book by Richard Eaton- In 2nd October 1666 A. D., Mughal authority issued an order (*sanad*) in the name of Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb to the "clerks [*mutasaddi*], assessors [*mu'amil*] past and present,

headman [*chaudhuri*], accountants [*qanungo*], and peasants [*ra'aya*, *muzari*] of the revenue circles [*pargana*] of sarkar Islamabad [i.e., Chittagong] know that : Shah Zain al-'Abidin has made it known that he has many dependents and has built a mosque, where a great many faqirs and inhabitants come and go. But as he has no means of maintaining the mosque, he is hopeful that the Government will bestow some land on him.”⁴⁸ Then investigating that particular matter, “....the revenue department has fixed the sum of six *shahi dun* and eight *kani*[i.e., 166.8 acres]of jungle land, laying outside the revenue rolls, and located in villages Nayapara and others of pargana Havilli Chittagong, as a charity for the expenses of the mosque as well as charity for the person mentioned above.....He and his descendants are not required to pay any land revenue or other demands as highway taxes, bridge taxes, special cesses, or any other assessments issuing from either the administrative or the revenue branches of government. Nor is he bound to seek a fresh *sanad* each year. Take great care to execute this order...”⁴⁹

After conquering Bengal in the position regarding religious freedom is set, Jahangir declared, “I ordered that with this exception (prohibition of forcible sati), they (the Hindus) may follow whatever is their prescribed custom, and none should exercise force or compulsion or oppression over another”.⁵⁰ The Emperor tried to prohibited sati and infanticide; issued an order for punishments for their infraction. Though foreign travellers referred, this prohibition was limited on paper only and never strictly enforced.⁵¹ Jahangir tried to put an end to the eunuch system in Bengal. He “issued an order that hereafter no one should follow this abominable custom, that the traffic in young eunuchs should be completely done away with.”⁵² In 1608 A.D., “he sent orders to the *Subahdar* of Bengal, Islam Khan” to abolish that particular system. Jahangir made the making of eunuchs “a capital offence, and Islam Khan was

instructed to assume charge of any castrated children known to be in private hands.”⁵³ According to Abul Fazl, at that time, “The *sarkars* of Ghoraghat and Sylhet were especially associated with this commerce.”⁵⁴ Akbar permitted to build temples.⁵⁵ Jahangir continued Akbar’s policy of giving gifts and land grants to brahmans and temples. For example, grants to Govind-dev, and Madan Mohan was unaffected. Infact both of the rulers did permanent favour to the *sevaks*, *faqirs* and brahmans.⁵⁶ Akbar had issued many orders regarding the temple management. In this context, grants to the *sevakas* in Mathura, Brindaban, could be found where Vaishnavism spread. Vaishnavism flourished in Bengal through the path of Chaitanya. Respecting these cultures, Jahangir issued a *farman* on 5th August 1613 A.D. allowing a tax-free grant of 20 *bighas* land to a Brahmin *sevak* Swamidas, son of Kishandas from the *pargana* of Katgar, *suba* Bengal.⁵⁷

In an ordinance which Jahangir issued after his accession, the slaughter of animals for food was prohibited for two days in a week- on Thursday, the day of his accession; and on Sunday, the day of Akbar’s birthday.⁵⁸ Jahangir permitted to celebrate various Hindu festivals like Diwali, Holi, Dashera, Rakhi, Shivratri etc., all over his empire. In *Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri*, Diwali has been mentioned as a festival of the Vaishya caste (probably due to their association with Lakshmi puja) and the occasion to meet friends and spend their time busily in gambling.⁵⁹ On the night of Sivaratri, Jahangir met a yogi and spent the whole night with him at Sangor (Kamalpur) in Bengal.⁶⁰

“Various state policy, laid by Akbar, were deeply rooted into the soil, and the minor assaults on the body politic, say the occasional display of the religious tolerance by Shah Jahan, could not do irreparable or incalculable harm to it until his successor Aurangzeb’s reign.”⁶¹ During the sixth year of Shah Jahan’s reign (1633 A.D.), the most significant step taken by him was his order- “that no temple whose foundation

had been laid during Jahangir's time but the construction not completed till then would be allowed to be completed".⁶² Again a *farman* dated 28 August 1639 A.D. was issued under the authority of Shah Jahn for a rent-free grant of 200 *bighas* of land in pargana Baikuntpur, *suba* Bihar for the Chatri of the mother of Man Singh. It was perhaps respect for the Brahmin sentiment that Shah Jahan made concessions to the cow.⁶³ According to Tavernier, Shah Jahan was credited with prohibiting women having children from burning themselves on the funeral pyre. They were commanded to live for the education of children. He described in Bengal women are burnt in another manner. To Tavernier, a woman in that country must be very poor if she does not come with the body of her husband to the margin of the Ganges in order to wash it after he is dead and to bathe herself before being burnt.⁶⁴ During the time of Shah Jahan, *madad-i-ma'ash* grants were quite common all over Bengal. A *farman* of Shah Jahan ordered the grant of "22 *bighas* of *madad-i-ma'ash* lands to Shaikh Muhammad, Shaikh Imad, Abdullah and Adam, who lived in the village of Dhubaria in the *pargana* Atia in Mymensingh district." The Shah Jahani *bigha* was equivalent to two or three present-day *bighas*.⁶⁵ At a *madrassa* at Kusbeh Bagha, an endowed institution of long-standing, the property appeared to have consisted of two portions, which were bestowed by two separate royal grants (*sanads*) respectively. It seems that the grant was made during the reign of Emperor Shah Jahan since it used a particular type of seal.⁶⁶

Aurangzeb lived a pious and virtuous life strictly according to the *sunni* principles and had learnt to follow religion in every walk of life. He had abolished all the practices which, according to him, were to be un-Islamic as per the *Shariat*. Unlike His predecessors, Aurangzeb was not content with issuing his ordinance for the willingness of any particular community. He established a separate department-

“Religious Censor, which was entrusted with the task of enforcing prohibition among the people.”⁶⁷ “On Hindu and Muslim festivals, clay figure of birds, animals, men and women were made to delight the children”- this representation of living beings was considered unlawful in Islam, and orders were given for the discontinuation of this practice in November 1665 A.D.⁶⁸ In addition, the tradition and practice of lighting lamps every Thursday night on the tombs of the saints and other pious persons was also stopped by Aurangzeb.⁶⁹ On the 8th April 1669 A.D., Aurangzeb issued an order which expected “....Governors of all the provinces to demolish the schools and temples of the infidels and with the utmost urgency; and to put down the teaching and the public practice of the religion of these misbelievers”. The justification for such an order was that it was apprehended that “the Brahman misbelievers used to teach their false books in their established schools, and that admirers and students both Hindu and Muslim, used to come from great distances to these misguided men in order to acquire these learning.”⁷⁰ The French traveller De Graaf makes a clear mention of the conversion of Hindus in Bengal by order of Aurangzeb in 1670 A.D. (traveller wrote in French language). The translation of the order was- In the month of January Moorish Governor and the officer received an order from the Grand Mogul Emperor to prevent the practice of the pagan religion throughout the country and to have all the temples or pagodas of the idol-worshippers walled up. At the same time, the taxes of the Mohammedan merchants were reduced, and those of the idol-worshippers were increased in the hope that some Pagans involved in the Mohammedan religion. And to show pity better, the Emperor sent to Mecca a very large sum of money in honour of the great Prophet Mohammed. He dispatched orders to defend all public places of debauchery; but for him, he did not obey these orders in his place.⁷¹ On the 7th of April 1662, Aurangzeb issued an order “To all *faujders*, *thanahdars*, *mutasaddis*, agents of

jagirdars, *karoris* and *amals* from Katak to Medinipur on the frontier of Orissa. The imperial paymaster Asad Khan has set a letter written by order of the Emperor, to say, the Emperor learning from the news-letters of the province of Orissa that, at the village of Tilkuti in Medinipur, a temple has been built recently, has issued his august mandate for its destruction, and the destruction of all temples built anywhere in this province by the worthless infields. Therefore, you are commanded with extreme urgency that, immediately on the receipt of this letter, you should destroy the above-mentioned temples. Every idol-house built during the last 10 or 12 years, whether with brick or clay, should be demolished without delay. Also do not allow the ...Hindus and...infields to repair their old temples. Report of the destruction of the temples should be sent to the court under the seal of the *qazis* and attested by pious *Shaikhs*".⁷² "On the 19th of December 1661, under the royal authority, Mir Jumla entered the city of Kuch Bihar and appointed Sayyid Md. Sadiq to be the chief Judge. Thereafter, he issued a *farman* to destroy all the Hindu temple and erect mosques in their stead. The judge himself with a battle-axe broke the image of Narayan."⁷³

"In 1668, Aurangzeb issued an order prohibiting the castration of children and their sale as eunuchs by their mercenary parents throughout in Eastern India."⁷⁴ "Francois Pyrard, a French traveller who was in Bengal just prior to the issue of the Imperial *farman* forbidding the 'eunuch tribute' noted", "One of the greatest trades in Bengal is in slaves; for there is a certain land subject to this King [Sylhet?] where fathers sell their children, and give them to the king as tribute; so most of the slaves in India are got from hence. Many of the merchants castrate them, cutting them when they are young, and not only the testicles, but also the entire organ."⁷⁵ After his return from Kashmir in 1663 A.D., Aurangzeb issued an order to the prohibited of sacrifice of widows in Mughal Empire, but he hardly succeeded in suppressing sati.⁷⁶ So far as the

regulations regarding the *madad-i-ma'ash* grants are concerned, the grant could be resumed by the Emperor at any time at his pleasure. Further, it was not transferable, and the grantees could not pass them on to their heirs without the imperial order. But in 1690, Aurangzeb issued an order by which *madad-i-ma'ash* became acquired hereditary character in Bengal.⁷⁷ From 1666, the Mughal *Subehdars* of Bengal madetax-free grants, mainly from jungle land as *madad-i-ma'ash* in Chittagong.⁷⁸ There are references that under the authority of Aurangzeb, appointed “Mughal officers in Sylhet issued more *madad-i ma'ash* grants to Hindus after the 1672–73 order than before that date.” In 1672-73 A.D., an order was issued on behalf of Emperor Aurangzeb in Sylhet district stating that “...all *madad-i-ma'ash* granted to Hindus be repossessed, with future such grants reserved for Muslims only”.⁷⁹ On the 11th of August, 1663 A.D., the *Subehdar* of Sylhet district issued an order in the name of Aurangzeb to Shah Jalal, granting 78.2 acres (20 *qulbas*) of jungle to the devotees of his shrine. Shah Jalal enjoyed the grant till the reign of Alamgir II (1754-59 A.D.).⁸⁰ Aurangzeb issued several *Qabz-ul-Wasil* (pay bill), *yaddhast* (memorandum) related with the religious matters for the maintenance of several mosques, controlling Quranic school, *rozina* (daily allowances of any shrines) etc.

For consolidating Mughal rule in Bengal prince Muhammad Azam re-imposed *Jizyah* during Aurangzeb's reign. It was declared that in conformity with the aim of the Islamic religion, the Emperor wastried to spread the tradition based on *Shariat* and Islamic philosophy; and further overthrow the practices of the infidels. “By an Imperial orders the *Jiziah* was reimposed on the ‘unbelievers’ in all parts of the Empire from 2nd April, 1679, in order, as the court historian records , to spread Islam and put down the practice of infidelity”.⁸¹ Many of the honest scholars of the time, provincial governors, Muslim military general, administrators etc., were appointed to

discharge the work (of collecting *Jizyah*) and make their future life better than the present.⁸² According to Jadunath Sarkar, “A strict collector like Mir Abul Karim increased the yield of the tax from Rs 26,000 a year for the whole city to more than four times the amount, in three months for half the city only (1682 A.D.).”⁸³ On the other hand, “Aurangzeb’s *farman* to every *suba* ordering that taxes should be collected only in accordance with the rules of the Holy Quranic law.”⁸⁴ “The *abwabs* or exactions imposed again and again in Mohammadan sovereigns, but in a *farman* dated 29th April, 1673 A.D. 41 *abwabs* abolished during the time of Aurangzeb. In Bengal 19 such exactions continued to be levied which put an end during British rule.”⁸⁵

Special Ensign of Mughal Farman

The *farmans* of Babur, the founder of the Mughal Empire, seems to have notable characteristics which were totally different from those of the other Muslim rulers in India. Most of the *farmans* of Babur carry an invocation on the top: “*Huw al-Ghani*” (He is rich). Below the invocation, in *tughra* style, it is written: “*Farman-i Zahiru’ddin Muhammad Babur Padshah Ghazi*”. Just below the *tughra* sentence appeared a large round seal with two circles-the inner circles read ‘Zahiru’ddin Muhammad Babur’, and the outer circle carried the names of Babur’s ancestors back from ‘Umar Shaikh to Amir Timur’. The first two lines of Babur’s *farman* were always half-lines which had been treated as an imperial prerogative. According to Iqbal Husain, this feature was also found in the royal orders of Iranian rulers (viz., Shah Ismail’s *farman* dated 25th June 1508 A.D.).⁸⁶ Babur and Humayun followed the lunar *Hijra* calendar in their *farman*.⁸⁷ But we do not come across the invocations in Humayun’s *farmans* which Babur used. However, in one of his *farmans* of 27 Ziqad 960/4 November 1553, the invocation: “*Allah-u Akbar*” has been used. This invocation, later on, was

used by Akbar in his *farmans* later on. Interestingly, the seal used in Humayun's *farman* was the same as Babur- i.e., a large round seal with two circles.⁸⁸ Most of the Mughal *farmans* during the reign of Akbar were composed in a highly stylized pre-*nasta'liq* semi-cursive *riqa* hand, which has a large number of *shikasta* forms.⁸⁹ The *nasta'liq* was popularized as an alternative mode of writing in India during the time of Akbar.⁹⁰ This script evolved from *Naskh* and *Ta'liq* script. Abul Fazl wrote, "It (*Nasta'liq* character) consists entirely of round lines. It is believed that Mir 'Ali of Tabriz, a contemporary of Timur, derived this peculiar style of writing from the *Naskh* and *Taliq*. The theory regarding the origin of the script in this manner is, however, debated because there is evidence of books in the *Nasta'liq* character, written before Timur's time."⁹¹ During the Mughal period, Muwlan Maqsd and Mawlana Ali Ahmed etc. were regarded as masters of this alternative style.⁹² The early *farmans* of Akbar beginning with the invocation: "*Huw al-Ghani*", appeared up to 1576 A.D.⁹³ Afterwards, Akbar's *farmans* carried the invocation "*La Zikr Allah-u Akbar*" (speaking of God Almighty). According to Badauni, in 983/1575-76, Akbar enquired about people's reaction if he ordered the words only *Allah-u Akbar* (God is Great) to be cut on the imperial seal and on the dies of his coins. One Haji Ibrahim argued that it would create confusion. However, from 1584, the last invocation was used in all Mughal Imperial *farmans*.⁹⁴ Further, in style similar to ancestors, Akbar also used the words: "*Farman-i Jalalu'd-din Muhammad Akbar Padshah Ghazi*" in *tughra* style below the invocation. In some of his *farmans*, for example, a *farman* of Ilahi 41/1595-96, issued to a Brahman grantee in Pathankot *pargana*, the Emperor did not use the word 'Muhammad'.⁹⁵ The first two lines of Akbar's *farmans* were always of half-lines, which was also one of the features of Babur's *farman*. On the other hand, the last portion contained the exhortation to officials as to what they should do.

The portion started with the word: *Mi bayad* (it is necessary). Sometimes these letters are written like the letters; sometimes the first word (*Mi*) is made much larger and thicker on the *farmans*.⁹⁶ Not only the Emperor but, as Badauni informs us, the respected persons of the time also used this prerogative. We may cite the example of Bairam Khan's *hukm* of 966/1558, and Munim Khan's *hukm* of Safar 974/August-September 1566 A.D. wherein both of them used the citation '*Ba-farman-i Jalalu'ddin Muhammad Akbar Padshah Ghazi*' at the top of the *hukm*. Bairam Khan and Munim Khan were the King's representative or Regent (*Wakil-us Saltanat*) at that time and held the title Khan-i Khanan. In fact, in the *hukm* of Hamida Banu Begum of Ramazan 989/September-October 1581 A.D., in accordance with the high status of Queen Mother, she enjoyed the two initial half-lines could be found.⁹⁷ According to Badauni, Akbar also set a pattern in regard to *a'imma* land grantees (grants given to *shaikhs* and *ulama*). Here the Emperor himself enquired into the grants of the leading *shaikhs* and *ulama* by granting them private interviews. Akbar assigned them some lands if he was satisfied with their need and merits (ordered followed from 983-84 A. H. or 1575-76 A.D.).⁹⁸ The procedure followed while granting the *madad-i ma'ash* grants by Akbar from the year 1567 followed the following steps. (1) The summary of the *farman* was recorded in the offices of the *wakil*, *mirbakhshi*, *sadr*, and the seal of each officer was affixed to confirm the respective endorsement. (2) The copy of each *farman* was preserved in the *daftar-i Khasa* (imperial chancery) etc.⁹⁹ Akbar introduced the solar Ilahi era in 992 A. H. or 1584-85 A.D., but it was calculated from the year which commenced on 11th March 1556 A.D. and it continued in all the *farmans* till the death of Jahangir.¹⁰⁰

Jahangir followed the same pattern as Akbar and also used *Allahu Akbar*.¹⁰¹ But most of his *farmans* issued during his reign did not bear his name but the name of his wife

Nur Jahan. During this period, the *riqa* style used in the front of the *farmans* was totally abandoned. The process for issuing the *farman-i-sabti* and *farman-i-bayazi*, was the same as it was under Akbar. Even for *farman-i-bayazi* (orders on important and confidential matters), Jahangir ordered that it only received only the imperial seal.¹⁰² Besides the old one, Jahangir and the later Mughal successors used a new type of square seal known as *Shanjarfi*. For the in-charge of great royal seals, Jahangir referred in his Memories “When I was prince I had entrusted, as a precaution, my own *uzuk* seal to the *Amir ul Umara* (Sharif), but when he was sent off to the province of Bihar, I made it over to Parvez. Now that Parvez went off against the Rana, I made it over, according to the former arrangement, to *Amir ul Umara*.”¹⁰³ The mark of royal hand was the special ensign of the *farmans* of Jahangir and Shah Jahan, known as *Panja-i-Mubarak* or *Panja-i Khasa-i-Shahan-Shahi*. When the Mughal ruler made an order with a ruler of any *suba*, and if he complied with the conditions of the treaty submitted to him, the *panja* was given, and the gist of the *farman*, which contained the terms of the treaty, was engraved on a gold plate. Even Shah Jahan wrote the whole of the *farman* himself, especially in important matters.¹⁰⁴ Muzzaffar Khan, one of the generals of Shah Jahan, in his collection of letters, gives copies of several *farmans* received by him, where two of these were totally written by the Emperor, while the *tughras* of the other two were in the royal hand and one had the royal signature. Shah Jahan’s *panja* on a *farman* gives a clear idea about the importance of the order in which the *tughra* on the left, the seal on the right, and the *panja* on the margin below it, were stamped.¹⁰⁵ According to Abdul Hamid Lahori, the procedure of Shah Jahan’s order- “In the *Diwan-i-khas*, the Emperor wrote with his own hand, replies to certain important letters. In reply to other letters which had been submitted to him by the court agents (*wakils*) of the nobles, the *wazir*, or the officers appointed

to read the dispatches of the *Subehdars* (*ariza-khwan*), the Emperor expressed his pleasure orally, and the secretaries wrote out the *farmans* accordingly. Their drafts were then submitted to him, and he corrected and improved their language and sense.”¹⁰⁶

From 1662 A.D., Aurangzeb used the citation *Bismillahir Rahmanar Rahim* (I begin in the name of God, Queen the Merciful, the Compassionate) instead of *Allhu Akbar*. However, he used the dates similarly as used under Akbar, only in the revenue registers. Even most of the Mughal rulers used the Turkish duodenary solar cycle, particularly in the revenue documents.¹⁰⁷ According to Saqi Mustad Khan, all the letters and petitions of Aurangzeb was written in *nastaliq* and *shikasta* style and in his own (Aurangzeb) hand.¹⁰⁸ “The beginnings of certain letters, addressed to the great nobles, were written by the Emperor with his own hand, in order to exalt and gratify the person addressed, or to emphasize the urgency of the order and the importance of the matter written about... or to remove all doubt about their genuineness. The fair copy of the *farman*, written in a large and beautiful hand, on paper sprinkled with gold dust, was sealed, rolled up, and put in a long narrow bag of cloth of gold, the mouth of which was tied with coloured strings and sealed on wax with the seals of the wazir. Such bags were called *kharitas*.”¹⁰⁹

¹Abul Fazl, *The Akbarnama*, trans. H. Beveridge, Vol. III, Calcutta: The Asiatic Society, 1939, p. 153.

²Hollinhead Beverly, *Religious Toleration in Mughal India*, owlcation.com retrieved on 11January, 2018.

³Abul Fazl, *Ain-i-Akbari*, trans. H. Blochmann, Vol.I, Calcutta: Asiatic Society of Bengal, 1873, p. iii.

⁴Chandra, Satish, *History of Medieval India (Part II- Mughal Period: 1526-1748)*, Delhi: Har-Anand Publications Pvt. Ltd., 2nd reprint 2006, p. 178.

⁵Hollinhead Beverly, *Religious Toleration in Mughal India*.

⁶Abul Fazl, *Ain-i-Akbari*, trans. H. S. Jarrett, Vol. II, Calcutta: Asiatic Society of Bengal, 1949, p. 95.

⁷Ghose, Sailen, *Archives of India: History and Assets*, Calcutta: Firma K. L. Mukhopadhyaya, 1963, pp. 15-19.

⁸Sarkar, Jadunath, *Mughal Administration*, M. C Sarkar and Sons, Calcutta, 1935, pp. 56-57.

⁹Roy, Atul Chandra, *History of Bengal (Mughal Period: 1526-1765 A.D.)*, Calcutta: Nababharat Publishers, 1968, p. 315.

¹⁰Ghulam Husain Salim, *The Riyazu-S- Salatin (A History of Bengal)*, trans. Maulavi Abdus Salam, Calcutta: Asiatic Society, 1902, p. 248.

¹¹Roy, *History of Bengal (Mughal Period: 1526-1765 A.D.)*, pp. 315-18.

¹²Eaton, Richard M, *The Rise of Islam and the Bengal Frontier: 1204-1760*, London: University of California Press, 1993, p. 160.

¹³Hasan, Ibn, *The Central Structure of the Mughal Empire*, New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal, Reprint May, 1970, p.87.

¹⁴Mirza Nathan, *Baharistan-i-Ghaybi (A History of Mughal Wars in Assam, Cooch Behar, Bengal, Bihar and Orissa during the Reign of Jahangir and Shahjahan)*, trans. M. I. Bohra, Vol. I, Assam: Department of Historical and Antiquarian Studies, Narayani Handiqui Historical Institute, p. 120.

¹⁵Eaton, *The Rise of Islam and the Bengal Frontier: 1204-1760*, p. 160.

¹⁶Mirza Nathan, *Baharistan-i-Ghaybi (A History of Mughal Wars in Assam, Cooch Behar, Bengal, Bihar and Orissa during the Reign of Jahangir and Shahjahan)*, trans. M. I. Bohra, Vol. II, Assam: Department of Historical and Antiquarian Studies, Narayani Handiqui Historical Institute, p. 476.

¹⁷*Ibid*, pp. 476-77.

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- ¹⁸Abul-Qadir Ibn-I-Muluk Shah or Al-Badaoni, *Muntakhbu-T Tawarikh*, trans. George S. A. Ranking, Vol. II, New Delhi: Atlantic Publishers and Distributors, 1990, pp. 279-80. Also see, *Ain-i-Akbari*, tr. H. Blochmann, Vol. I, pp. 186-87.
- ¹⁹*Ain-i-Akbari*, tr. H. Blochmann, Vol. I, pp. 205.
- ²⁰*Ibid.*
- ²¹*Ibid*, pp. 166-67.
- ²²Abul Fazl, *The Akbarnama*, trans. H. Beveridge, Vol. I, Calcutta: Asiatic Society, 1897, p.32.
- ²³*Ain-i-Akbari*, tr. H. Blochmann, Vol. I, p. 205.
- ²⁴*Ibid*, p. 205.
- ²⁵*Muntakhbu-T Tawarikh*, tr. George S. A. Ranking, Vol. II, p. 316. *Ain-i-Akbari*, tr. H. Blochmann, Vol. I, p. 195.
- ²⁶*Ain-i-Akbari*, tr. H. Blochmann, Vol. I, p. 205.
- ²⁷*Ibid*, p. 207.
- ²⁸*Ibid.*
- ²⁹*Ibid.*
- ³⁰*Ibid*, p. 210.
- ³¹*Ibid*, pp. 278-79.
- ³²Khwajah Nizamuddin Ahmed, *Tabaqat-i-Akbari*, trans. Brajendranath De, Vol. II, Calcutta: Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal, 1936, p. 562.
- ³³Mehta, J. L., *Advanced Study in the History of Medieval India*, Vol. III, New Delhi: Sterling Private Limited, Reprint 2012, p. 279.
- ³⁴Sharma, *The Religious Policy of the Mughal Emperors*, pp. 42-43.
- ³⁵Chaudhury, Sushil, "A Note on 'Sati' in Medieval India" in *Proceedings of the Indian History Congress*, 26 (part. II), 1964, p. 81.
- ³⁶*Ibid.*

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- ³⁷Anthony Monserrate, *The Commentary of Father Monserrate, S. J. (On his Journey to the Court of Akbar)*, trans. J. S. Hoyland, annotated by S. N. Banerjee, London: Oxford University Press, 1922, p. 61.
- ³⁸*Muntakhbu-T Tawarikh*, tr. George S. A. Ranking, Vol. II, p. 302.
- ³⁹Sangar, Satya Prakash, *Crime and Punishment in Mughal India*, Delhi: Sterling Publishers, 1967, p. 164.
- ⁴⁰*Ain-i-Akbari*, tr. H. Blochmann, Vol. I, p. 207.
- ⁴¹*Muntakhbu-T Tawarikh*, tr. George S. A. Ranking, Vol. II, p. 306.
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CHAPTER- VI

The Growth of Cultural Synthesis in Bengal: The Mughal Effect

With the consolidation of the Islamic rule in the eastern and southeastern parts of India, more particularly, with the emergence of a new Muslim capital at Sonargaon in the area known as Bengal, the name Bangla gradually gained currency. During the medieval period, Bangla was variously referred to as *Diyar-e-Banglah*, because the land on the both sides of the river Padma or Ganges in Chapai Nawabganj, Murshidabad and Maldah districts became gradually known as *Diyar*, and occasionally as *Shershabadiya*, referring to its ancestral link with the Afghan ruler Sher Shah Sur in the region. The dialect of the region was also heavily influenced by Persian.¹ Bengal also appears as *Suba-i-Bangla* (the province of Bengal) in the Sherpur inscription dated 1042 A.H. or 1632 A.D. (inscription no.273), at Churihatta inscription dated 1060 A.H. or 1650 A.D. (inscription no.285).² The first Islamic inscription from the reign of sultan Ali Mardan Khalji asserts that Islam grew every moment due to the efforts of the ruler.³ During the time of Muhammad bin Tughlaq Bangala was divided into three part – “*Diyar-i-Sonargaon* comprising eastern Bengal, *Diyar-i-Satgaon* comprising western Bengal, *Diyar-I Lakhnauti* comprising northern and central Bengal.”⁴ According to Ghulam Husain Salim “....Bengal was bounded on the south by the sea; on the north by hills (that is, those south of Nepal, Sikkim, and Bhutan); on the east by hills (that is, those of Chittagong and Arakan), and on the west by the Subah of Behar.”⁵ During the reigns of the Independent Muslim rulers like Ilyas Shah, Alauddin Husain Shah, Nusrat Shah etc. “...the Musalman kingdom of Bengal was more extensive than its geographical limits, and included northern

portions of Orissa or Jajuagar, Kuch Behar, Kamrup or Western Assam with portions of Eastern Assam, and the whole of Upper Behar (a Governor to represent the Bengal Musalman king being posted at Hajipur, opposite to Patna), and the eastern portions of South Behar including Sarkars Monghyr and Behar.” Then all over Orissa was conquered by last Afghan ruler of Bengal Sulaiman Karni.⁶ Towards the end of the 16th century (between 1576 to 1582 A.D.), Bengal was finally subdued into Akbar’s dominion and became one of the Mughal provinces- the *Suba-i-Bangla*.⁷ The book named *Riyazu-S-Salatin* mention, “The nomenclature of *Suba* originated from the time of Emperor Akbar, who designated the fiscal areas as follows from the time of the ten-years settlement: A *Suba* was an aggregate of *Sarkars*, a *Sarkar* or Division was an aggregate of *Dasturs*, a *Dastur* was an aggregate of *Parganas* or *Mahals* (used as equivalent expressions), and a *Pargana* or *Mahal* meant a fiscal division, the fiscal unit, coinciding with the dominions of a native chief under the Mughal dynasty.”⁸ The words used prior to Akbar's time to denote fiscal divisions or tracts of country more extensive than the *Pargana*, were *Shaq*, *Khattah*, *Arsiih*, *Diyar*, *Vilayet*, *Iqta*, *Bilad* and *Mamlakat*. During the pre-Mughal period it was designated as *Shaq-i-Sama*, *Khattah-i-Oudh*, *Arsah-i-Gorakpui*, *Diyir-i* or *Vilayet-i-Lakhnauti*, *Vilayet-i-Mean Doab*, *Iqta'-i-Kara*, *Bilad Bang*, *Mamlakat Lakhnanti*.⁹

During the Mughal period, Bengal consists of 24 Sarkars and 787 Mahals, where most of the *Zamindars* came from the *Kayastha* caste. Orissa, as a part of Bengal, consisted of 5 Sarkars and 99 Mahals.¹⁰ In the reign of Akbar 16 Sarkars were recorded namely Udambar, Janatabad, Fathabad, Mahmudabad, Khilafatabad, Bakla, Tajpur, Ghoraghat, Pinjara, Barbakabad, Bazuha, Sonargaon, Sharifatabad, Sulaimanabad, Satgaon, Mandaran.¹¹ In 1582 A.D., 19 Sarkars as per Todar Mal’s assessment (included Purnia, Chatgaon, Sylhet) came to be known as *Suba-i-Bangla*.¹² During

Aurangzeb's reign, Bengal was divided into 34 Sarkars, but for the maintaining of its executive administration, these *suba* was divided into 12 Faujdari areas- Islamabad, Srihatta, Rangpur, Rangamati, Jalalgarh (Purnia), Akbarnagar (Rajmahal), Rajshahi, Burdwan, Balasore, Hugli, Murshidabad, Hijli.¹³ Bengal witnessed major changes during Mughal rule in almost every sphere of life. Islam gradually spread to different corners of this region. Sources offer an opportunity to look into the inner story of the royal places, the public and private lives of the rulers, their interests and day to day activities, ethnic background, legal and actual positions, patronage of art and culture, religious learning, contact with the outside world and many other facts of the ruling class. Under the firm administration of the Mughals, exercised through the *Subehdars*, the region continued witnessing social, cultural, economic growth.

Some records proved that "...the model of imperial authority projected from the Mughal court drew on both Indian and Perso-Islamic notions of kingship" because a large section of Persian, Uzbek and Turani nobles participated in Mughal court. Here Akbar's policy which granulated from 1580 in the wake of his own experiment as "king of Islam"¹⁴ and the concept of "universal kingship".¹⁵ But Aurangzeb, an orthodox *sunni* Muslim, wanted to convert the land of the in field in to *dar-ul-Islam* by utilizing the resources of the state. So this cross-bred ideal of political authority affected in a miniaturized form in most of the Mughal provinces also (including Bengal). For example, in accordance with the Persian traditions, right from the Mughal Emperor down to the lowest employee, all were bound together by mutual coercion and responsibility through a term of 'salt' (*namak*), which displayed "notions of protection and dependency that operated simultaneously at social, political and superhuman levels." A study of the behaviour of officers and their subordinates in Mughal Bengal represents how minutely the term of salt had infiltrated the ruling

class over there.¹⁶ Therefore, the concept of ‘salt’ in Mughal Bengal expressed ‘pervasive ideas of patronage, clientage, loyalty and betrayal’. On the other hand, *namakkhurdan*, “(to eat the salt of someone) means to accept, acknowledge, and enjoy the benefits of a patron.”¹⁷ Conferrable Imperial cloak known as *khil’at*, was also a Mughal tradition of incorporation upon his subject or Emperor’s former enemy, influenced the Bengali traditions. Historian observed it “was exercised in virtue of this incorporation into the royal person by means of succession established by physical contact through royal clothing...” Here have a reference regarding the incorporation of *Khil’at* to Mughal Emperor Akbar- “This sort of ritual was enacted at the dawn of Mughal rule in Bengal, when Daud Karrani submitted to imperial forces in April 1575. Before prostrating himself in the direction of Akbar’s capital....Bengali sultan donned a Mughal sword and an embroidered belt in addition to a cloak of Akbar”, which symbolized the defeated sultan’s incorporation into “Akbar’ person as well as Akbar’s Empire.”¹⁸

Another tradition of *jawhar* or the extinction of king’s wives, other ladies of the harem and their children (through funeral pyre) as an alternative to suffering in the eventuality of their being captured by enemy forces. Richard Eaton mentioned, *Jawhar*, “...a Rajput rite was assimilated into Mughal imperial culture through Akbar’s policy of blending the Rajputs into the Mughal services and incorporating Rajput women in the Mughal *harem*.”¹⁹ The same was incorporated into Bengal according to a reference. In 1617, when Qasim Khan, a Mughal *Subehdar* in Bengal, defeat in a battle, “he immediately went into his harem and separated the head of his chief wives with his own hand, and he ordered his brothers and relations to kill the rest....many of his comrades in the presence of one another performed the ceremony of *jawhar* of their families.”²⁰ All these political cultures, the Islamization of Bengal

under the Mughal authority brought about various other changes in every wake of life. For example, the new settlements in the region were quite often named after the founder viz., Mahmudpur (a *pur* or settlement founded by Mahmud) in Satkhira in south-Bengal, Mulla Tero Gharia (a settlement of thirteen families under a *Mulla*) near Kushtia city and Baro Gharia (a settlement of twelve families) near the town of Chapai Nawabganj (upper Padma river area where many descendants of Afghan Soldiers were settled during Muslim rule).²¹ In addition, many ports of Bengal were used by the Haj pilgrims in the East to travel to Makkah and Madinah. The Mughals were able to establish a very practical administrative and revenue system in the region. Besides, many old cities in Bengal were re-established under the Mughal domination with new names. The authentic history of the city of Gaur begins with its conquest in 1198 A.D. (594 A.H.) by the Muhamadans, who made it their first capital in Bengal. This was the period when were erected numerous mosques and other Muhamadans buildings. “When the Muslim rulers of Bengal established their independence, they transferred the seat of government to Sunargaon and Panduah. Panduah was soon after deserted, and the royal residence was re-transferred to Gaur, whilst Sunargaon continued as the capital of East Bengal.”²² According to Abul Fazl, the city was known in his time both as Lakhnauti and Gaur, whereas it was known as “Jinnatabad” during Humayun’s time.²³ According to Badauni “Bakhtiyar Ghori founded a city and named it after himself ‘Gour’. The capital was shifted in Sulaiman Kararani's time further westward to Tandah. After the conquest of Bengal by the Mughals under the Akbar, Gaur again became the headquarters of the Mughal Government, and the Mughal Imperialists under Munaim Khan, Khan-i-Khanan, the first Mughal Viceroy of Bengal, occupied it.” Afterwards, the Mughal metropolis of Bengal shifted to Tandah, then to Akbarnagar or Rajmahal (1610 A.D. under Islam

Khan) until it was removed to Jahangirnagar or Dacca, and at last to Murshidabad.²⁴ The city of Dacca is situated on the banks of the Budhiganga; and the Ganges, named Padma, flows three karoh or kos distant from this city. The Mughal impact on the city could be witnessed during the rule Jahangir, as the city was renamed Jahangirnagar. From that time till about the end of the reign of Aurangzeb, the city remained the Mughal capital of the Bengal Suba. The decision of the transfer of capital appears to have been decided in the light of the fact that the Muslim dominions in Bengal had considerably extended eastward, and Rajmahal ceased to occupy a central position in Bengal. The City occurred as an Imperial Thana in 1584; the Mahal to which it belonged was named 'Dhakka Bazu'.²⁵ Another city was Akbarnagar alias Rajmahal, situated on the banks of the Ganges. Formerly it was a large and populous city. Sher Shah had already made plans to shift the seat of Government of Bengal from Tandah to Rajmahal, but this was carried out by Rajah Man Singh, Akbar's Governor of Bengal, who named the place Rajmahal, and subsequently Akbarnagar, after Emperor Akbar.²⁶

The most popular mint towns which existed in Bengal during the pre-Mughal period were: (1) Lakhnuti, (2) Firuzabad (Panduah), (3) Satgaon, (4) Shahr-i-Nau (not identified), (5) Ghiyaspur, (6) Sunargaon, (7) Muazzamabad (i.e., Sylhet or Mymensingh), (8) Fathabad (Faridpur town), (9) Khalifatabad (Bagerhat town in Jessore), and (10) Husainabad (probably close to Gaur).²⁷ It is interesting to note that the original name of Chittagong has been derived from the Arabic words '*shati*' *al-Ganga*, meaning 'Ganges coast' (local form *Chhatgaon* or *Sadkawan*).²⁸

As regards religion, the attitude of the Mughals was liberal towards the people of Bengal. The Indo-Persianized syncretic traditions provided a new impetus to the religious culture of the region. The first Islamic inscription from the reign of Sulatan

Ali Mardan Khalji informed that from the very beginning of Muslim rule in Bengal, a class division in Muslim society existed, which were denoted as *khas* (elite) and *am* (commoners). During the Mughal reign, a dividing line can also be seen among the nobility. The elite class of the Muslim society known as *ashraf* (prominent among the *ashraf* were *qazis* or judges) and Muslim commoners known as *atraf/ajlaf/arzal* (people in the periphery were comparing to the *mlechcha* in the Hindu society) who formed the bulk of the indigenous Muslim population in the rural areas.²⁹

The Hindus and Muslims continued to have their own courts of justice. The Muslims under the *subehdar's* authority were organized into '*millat*' (Arabic for a particular 'religious group'). In central and northern Bengal, it was organized around a particular *mulla* in Muslim society. The *millat* consisted of about 80 to 400 members, who feasted together during festivals, performed rites of passage simultaneously. Even they prayed together in times of community stress.³⁰ On the other hand, the Hindu *Mandali* was dominated by the learned *pandits* or Brahmins. The features of foreign influence are also seen in the Bengali monument of the Mughal period. Every new Islamic settlement in Bengal evolved around a congregational Mosque.³¹ The construction of public places such as markets, hospitals, inns, fountains, wells and ponds around the central Mosque in the city-centre created a bridge between the religious and public domain and also helped to undertake welfare activities on a popular level that ultimately aided the process of Islamization of the region.³²

During the Mughal period, the new vernacular mosques (often with the thatched roof resting on mud walls) which were being constructed incorporated the architectural vocabulary from local tradition spread all over the rural areas of Bengal. Some times, an artificial pond was attached to the mosque to serve as a place of *wudhu*, i.e., ablution or purification procedure before the prayer of Allah.³³ Such water bodies had

an aesthetic effect on the landscape of the surrounding. In the villages of Northern Bengal, the palm-grove pillars can be seen supporting the roof of the prayer hall. The simpler form of prayer places contributed to the easy acceptance of Islam by rural folk. It must be noted that the rural mosques in Bengal came into existence either due to the common efforts of community members or through individual religious personalities such as *sufi shaikhs*, ulema and even petty religious laymen. Quite often, these rural mosques received *madad-i-ma'ash* or tax-free land grants. Actually, these grants were awarded directly to the leaders of the mosques who founded mosques in the far remote areas such as forests and later on newly emerged lands in the delta caused by the changing patterns of the courses of rivers in Bengal. In particular, in the areas of Noakhali, Sylhet, and Chittagong mosques were constructed with endowment land granted by local administrative authorities.³⁴ The design and beauty of the architecture of the Mughal Age stood in contrast to those constructed during the preceding periods. The Mughal rulers did not follow the architectural features of the Sultanate period in Bengal. As a result, the domes of the Mughal mosques differed enormously from the Sultanate period. The surface of the domes was decorated with mosaic, whereas the sides of the arches were decorated with floral designs. The pinnacles of the domes were long and pointed. The walls of the mosques were ornamented with floral designs. In addition, the size and shape of the buildings in Mughal period were big and massive. Some big '*darawjas*' (doors) were built in Bengal during the Mughal Age. Also, some buildings called '*katra*' were built in the Mughal Age, which served the purpose of guest houses. A '*katra*', a tall minaret and a mosque were built in old Maldah during the time of Emperor Akbar. *Subehdar* Shahjada Azam built a huge '*katra*' on the bank of the river Buriganga. Next, *Choto Katra* was built in the time of Shayesta Khan.³⁵

Historian Eaton had given a reference of mosques (with their special features) developed during Mughal Bengal. For example, in Sherpur (southern Bogra), surviving the earliest architectural record of the new order is the Kherua mosque, built by members of the Qaqshal clan in that region (1582 A.D.). Here the feature of the ground plan of that mosque- a single-aisle rectangle divided into three bays, would become an artistic feature of the Mughal style in Bengal. Most of the pre-Mughal inscriptions (even building's inscription) in Bengal had been written in Arabic style. But these particular building inscriptions were in Persian (the official language of the Mughals). Eaton said, "Thus the mosque aptly reflects the culturally ambiguous position of its patrons, with one foot in Bengal, the other still in Delhi."³⁶

In Dhaka, the imperial style of the Mughals has survived, in particular the Barokatra (1644), Sat Gumbad mosque (1664–76 A.D.) and the mosques of Haji Khwaja Shahbaz (1679 A.D.) and Khan Muhammad Mirza (1704 A.D.). The battlements, cusped entrance arches, increased articulation of exterior and interior tops, corner turrets with pavilions- all these features of the monuments in Bengal carried the Muslim tradition with the aesthetic vision of Mughal imperialism (especially in the Sat Gumbad mosque). Next, the Lalbagh Fort in Dhaka carried some Mughal features with its various constructions. Like, build a garden, tank, mosque, walled enclosure with garden, *Diwan-i-Khas* (audience hall) etc. into the fort.³⁷

Subehdar Shahjada Azam started to construct the Lalbagh Fort. *Subehdar* Shayesta Khan, thought tried to complete it but could not succeed. As a result, the construction of the Lalbagh Fort remained incomplete. This fort is the greatest example of Mughal architecture in Bengal. Legends say after the death of Iran Dukht, the daughter of Shayesta Khan, popularly known as Paribibi, the construction was stopped. As per traditions, Paribibi is still inside the fort. Every full moon, she comes down on the

fort, sings, dance and moves around it. The name of Shayesta Khan is also associated with the mosque of Chowkbazaar, the mosque on the bank of the River Buriganga and the Saat Gombuz Mosque.³⁸

The influence of the Mughal power in Dhaka can also be clearly seen in the Atiya mosque in Mymensingh District.³⁹ Out of the 188 dated mosques built in Muslim rule in Bengal, most of them were established in the western portions of that delta, near Gaur and Pandua (old Muslim capitals and at present situated in Maldah and Murshidabad districts). Only a few of them are located in eastern districts like Comilla, Rangpur, Khulna, Jessore, Bakarganj.⁴⁰ In Mosque, the ‘*Fatiha-yi-darvishi*’ prayers were offered. *Al-Fahiha* is the first chapter of the Quran in every Rakaat. Its seven verses (*ayat*) made a prayer that is dedicated to the *darvishes* or the Muslim holy men.⁴¹ Historian’s observation regarding all of these mosques was “...mosque is the physical embodiment of the social reality of Islam, and hence the paramount institution by which community identity and solidarity are expressed.” It was like the “congregational” mosque (*jamimasjid*), in which Muslims gather once a week (Friday) for a sermon read by one of its functionaries (according to Eaton).⁴² During the time of Akbar, “Azan, Prayers, Fast, Pilgrimages were regulated”.⁴³ Badauni’s statement that Akbar never stopped Friday prayers of Islam. Akbar issued an order that “prayers and Azan were stopped in the unauthorized mosques, built during and after the rebellions in Bengal and Behar...”⁴⁴

Construction of Dated Mosques in Bengal, 1200–1800			
year	Ordinary	Congregational	Total
1200–1250	2	0	2
1250–1300	3	1	4
1300–1350	2	0	2
1350–1400	4	1	5
1400–1450	5	0	5

Construction of Dated Mosques in Bengal, 1200–1800			
year	Ordinary	Congregational	Total
1450–1500	52	9	61
1500–1550	28	28	56
1550–1600	15	2	17
1600–1650	7	0	7
1650–1700	17	0	17
1700–1750	8	0	8
1750–1800	4	0	4
Total	147	41	188

Sources, Richard M. Eaton, *The Rise of Islam and the Bengal Frontier: 1204-1760*, p. 67.

Actually, Islam entered this region as a religion close to nature (*din al fitra*). Professor Siddique noticed, “Bengal experienced great prosperity during the rule of some independent Muslim sultans, whose far-reaching welfare works, such as public roads and *siqaya* (water tanks, wells) helped spread Islam to the farthest corners of the region.”⁴⁵ In addition to the pieces of evidence on the construction of mosques, we have found on the construction of local Hindu temples also. As per records, in Sylhet, whenever a new village was established, there built a temple by the founding landlord dedicated to the goddess Kali (if the founder belongsto a *shakta* Hindu). A temple of Vishnu would be constructed if the founding landlordwas a Vaishnava. Even most of the villagers were Vaishnava, and they would build a temple of Radha and Krishna known as *akhara*. A temple of goddess Manasa founded if the area were infested with snakes. Then, if a village were founded by Muslims, shrine of popular Muslim *pir* would be established.⁴⁶

During the Mughal rule in Bengal, many famous *madrasas* like *madrasa-i-bari* and *dar-baris* (*dar* means lesson, *bari* in Bengali means house or building) were

established, where knowledge and learning flourished.⁴⁷ At the same time, the congregational mosques often functioned as the centres of higher education and whereas normal mosques also acted as *maktabs*. “An early inscription from Naohata records such a mosque served as an academy for the area where scholarly subjects were discussed.”⁴⁸ The *Khanqahs* had a strong influence in rural Bengal at the grass-root level. Some of the *Khanqahs* had public facilities attached to them, such as kitchens and free hospitals.⁴⁹ The numbers of *Khanqahs* as well as other shrines like *dargah*, *rowza*, *mazar* etc., increased as the Muslim population gradually increased in the region.⁵⁰ During the Mughal period, Gaur developed as one of the prominent intellectual and cultural centres in north Bengal. From the middle of the 14th century, in eastern Bengal, Sonargaon became a prosperous cultural centre after the arrival of a famous scholar Shaykh Sharaf al-u-din abu Tawwama. In addition, Pandua, Tandah, Rajmahal, Murshidabad, Jahangirnagar were the centres of learning during the 16th and 17th century. In northern Bengal, Ghoraghat (a present district in Dinajpur) attracted many *ulama* and students during the Mughal period.⁵¹ The syllabus of the *madrasas* covered *fiqh* (Islamic jurisprudence, observance of rituals, morals and social legislation in Islam) of four famous schools of Islamic *sharia*,⁵² which indicates the liberal and religious tolerance prevailed in Bengal. Akbar ordered that every student must-read books on morals, arithmetic, notations peculiar to arithmetic, agriculture, geometry, astronomy, medicine logic, the *tabi*, *riyazi* and *ilahi* sciences and history.⁵³ Akbar issued a *farman* making mathematics one of the compulsory subjects to be taught in the *madrasas*.⁵⁴ He had also ordered that the students learning Sanskrit, ought to understand the *Vyakaran*, *Nyaya*, *Vedanta* philosophy and Patanjali, Panini’s *Ashtadhyayi*, popular grammar books like *Katantra*, *Mugdharodh*.⁵⁵ Badauni described astronomy as considered essential throughout India, and Akbar issued a

farman commending its study.⁵⁶ It is said that during the reign of Aurangzeb, the *madrasas* followed an Arabic curriculum found from *Dars-i-Niami* of Mulla Niam al-Din.⁵⁷ “It includes...grammar, syntax, rhetoric, philosophy, logic, scholasticism, *tafsir*, *fich*, *usulu-i-fich*, *Hadis* and the science of mathematics.”⁵⁸ “Till the time of Akbar, Hindus did not like to attend Muslim *madrasas*. But when Persian became the court language in the time of that Monarch Hindus had to attend Muslim institutions to learn Persian.”⁵⁹

Under the Mughal rule the people of Bengal came into direct contact with the thoughts, ideas, and behaviours of people of different countries and regions, which had a profound impact on the culture of the region. For example, their dressing pattern, food habit, education, religious views, art, architecture and literature were greatly influenced. A remarkable change in the dress and attire of the rich Hindus and the *Zamindars* could be noticed. Before Mughals, “Men and women for the most part go naked wearing only a cloth (*lungi*) about the loins.”⁶⁰ But after coming into contact with the Mughal culture, they started liking the Mughal dress. Ornamented and pearl-studded glittering dress, ‘salwar’ and ‘kamiz’ adorned the Hindus and the Muslims alike. According to Manrique, an Italian traveller, “The dress of the common men and women, is made of cotton-cloth without any tailoring.”⁶¹ In the Mughal period, the rich and middleclass women wore attractive dresses. They used to go out sometimes in Palanquins. In contrast, the condition of the villagers was not very good. They wore normal dresses and wooden sandals. According to a reference, from this time, “a special range of cooking developed in Bengal known as Mughlai Khana.”⁶² Taste in food items changed. ‘*Kabab*’, ‘*Rezala*’, ‘*Korma*’ and other Mughal foods took their places beside the usual fish, rice and vegetables of the Bengalis.⁶³ Akbar issued an ordinance in 1002 A.H. (1593 A.D.) that wine could be taken on medical grounds and

on the advice of the physician only. Punishment would be meted out to those who indulged in excessive drinking, carousals and disorderly conduct. Interestingly, the Emperor ordered a wine shop to be set up near the palace from where the people who wanted to purchase wine “as a remedy for sickness, could do so by having their name, and that of their father and grandfather, written down by the clerk.”⁶⁴ Sebastuen Manrique, an Italian traveller who visited India during the reign of Shah Jahan, “did not find any vineyards in Bengal and hence no grape wine in the country.”⁶⁵

As a consequence of the Mughal rule, a completely new code of life embracing administration, education, moral values and religion was introduced into the Bengali culture. References are aplenty regarding Muslims joining in Hindu festivals like Diwali and Dashera. During the reign of Akbar, these two festivals were celebrated as state festivals.⁶⁶ All the Muslim governors of Mughal Bengal were ordered to acquaint themselves with the local people and their way of life and to educate themselves on Bengal. This brought them in close contact with the local people, which led to the fusion of the two cultures and the further popularization of Islam. Even the Muslims assimilated with other culture. It has been observed, “...during Diwali...the ignorant ones amongst Muslims, particularly the women, perform the ceremonies. ...They celebrate it like their own Id and send presents to their daughters and sisters... They colour their pots... fill them with red rice and send them as presents. They attach much importance and weight to this season.”⁶⁷

The Early Pathan rulers like Sultan Ghiyasuddun, Hussain Shah, etc. are all known to have patronized the Bengali language and literature. Later on, Akbar, in order to bring about a synthesis of the two faith and cultures, introduced many new liberal *farmans*. Also, Mughal rulers had Hindu wives and appointed Indian in important offices of the state. Some Mughals did settle down and mingled with the local people forever.⁶⁸ A

custom followed in India, especially in the region of Sylhet, which was a part of the Bengal province, that the people make eunuchs of some of their good looking sons and give them to the governor in place of revenue or *mal wajibi*. This custom was even adopted in other provinces, and every year, some children were thus ruined and cut off from procreation. But Jahangir “issued an order that hereafter no one should follow this abominable custom”. The Emperor send a *farman* to Islam Khan and other governors of the *suba* of Bengal “that whoever should commit such acts should be capitally punished, and that they should seize eunuchs of tender years who might be in anyone’s possession.”⁶⁹

The Mughal rule under Akbar created conditions for the spread of education. Since the Persian language was used in government offices, the Hindus and Muslims alike learnt Persian to get government jobs, particularly of '*Munshi*'. Persian literature also developed considerably as the books of the famous Persian poet Sheikh Saadi were very popular in this country at that time. The *Nawabs* and *Subehdars* like Kasim Khan, Shah Shuja, Mir Jumla, Shayesta Khan and Murshid Quli Khan worked a lot to develop the Persian language in Bengal.⁷⁰ At the same time, the influence of the Persian language on Bengali literature during the Mughal period can very well be observed. We can have an idea of the same through an observation that “Mughal kings patronized Iranian poets and scholars and the impact of Persian culture and language is discernable on all aspects of the intellectual and socio-cultural life of India. Indian officers and nobles employed at the court, wore Iranian dress, spoke Persian language and enjoyed Persian poetry”.⁷¹ When the influence of a rich and endowed language falls on another language, the grandeur of the latter is enhanced. The same happened in the case of the Bengali language, which got enriched following the subject and style of the Persian language. Gradually the use of Persian words in

Bangla writings began to increase. The Bengali poets introduced and expounded the ideas and thoughts of Persian literature in their poems. *Gazals* and Sufi literature began to evolve, bearing similarities to Persian literature. Actually, the Mughal *darbar* gave special privilege to the Persian poets.⁷² Though the Hindu poets were inspired by Sanskrit literature nevertheless, many of them could not avoid the Persian influence. The *Vaishnava Padavali* was composed following the Persian style. The effect of Persian literature, Persian words can be observed in the writing of the authors like Bharata Chandra Raigunakar, Chandi Das etc. The *Baul* songs developed in Bengal during the Mughal rule.⁷³ The poets at that time composed mourning songs of the Muharram also. The Muslims in Bengal applied the Perso-Islamic expressions. For example, *Bismillah* (with the name of Allah), *lab be-gur* (at the door of the rapture) and *be-jahannamrasid* (deuced in *jahannamor* hell), which was the reflections of Iranian and non-Iranian Muslim culture. They welcomed the Persian renderings of their texts, religious scriptures and traditions, which were translated in full into Persian by several Hindu authors to avoid them being forgotten.⁷⁴ Persian culture gradually spread in Bengal, and soon, Arabic-Persian words took permanent roots in the Bengali language and literature. Chandi Das, a great poet of the medieval period, used some Perso-Arabic words in his *Shri Krishna Kirtan*. In addition, many Bengali books began to be written in Persian script.⁷⁵ Many Sufi saints used Persian particularly for their scholarly communications, viz. for written works such as *malfuzat* and *maktubat*.⁷⁶ Then, for assimilation of the two cultures, *khanqahs* played an important role. Gradually, the influence of Islam was visible on various aspects of life and culture of the Bengali Muslim society.⁷⁷

The strong association between Persian and Mughal imperial culture led Mughal *Subehdars* and other officials to provide support and patronage to seminaries attached

to mosques and *khanqahs*. One of the best-known seminaries was the famous *madrasa* in Patna built by Saif Khan, the *Subehdar* of Bihar during the 1628–32 A.D. under the reign of Shah Jahan. Here attached a mosque and a *humam* with that *madrasa*.⁷⁸ Even during that phase, in the schools maintained by gentry and zamindars (Hindu and Muslim), Persian was taught as a subject. Persian schools imparted instruction with the prime focus upon mastering the reading and writing ability of the pupils. Mostly the *Pandnameh*, *Gulistan* and *Bustan* of Saadi were used for academic purposes in the schools. Recent observation found that “A branch of the family of Raja Rajballabh was so well-versed in Persian that they founded a school where they taught Persian. This family was well known as the Lalababus of Japsa.”⁷⁹ The celebrated poet Bharatchandra Roy, the author of the *Annadamangal Kavya*, studied Persian from a certain Ramchandra Munshi. Kavi Kankan Mukundaram has copiously used Persian words in his work *Chandimangal* (religious poem). “The words are Saiyad (Sayyid), Mugal (Mughal), Kitab (Kitab), Nishan (Nishan), Shirni (Shirini), Koran (Quran) etc.”⁸⁰

Persian was referring to the status of a ‘shastra’ (*para-sika Shastram*)- “not just as a practical medium to be used for keeping revenue accounts or composing a petition to the government, but as a formal intellectual discipline.”⁸¹ According to Kumkum Chatterjee, “Mastery of this discipline was also deemed to be one of the essential attributes of a Hindu raja. Hindu zamindars of the eighteenth century sought to convince their subjects of their cultural and intellectual refinement but stressing their achievements in...Persian and Hindusthani poetry,...Persian calligraphy, and so on.”⁸² This is evident from the fact that libraries of the gentry and aristocracy were stacked with classics of Indo-Persian literature, including *tarikhs*. Various kinds of historical narratives (like chronicles about the different reigns of Hindu-Muslim kings

and Emperors) composed in Bengal during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries were inflected with features derived from the *tarikh* tradition. This tradition was first introduced in India through the military conquests of the Turkish during the 11th-12th century.⁸³ Example of *tarikh* tradition– Abul Fazl’s *Akbarnama*, Badauni’s *Muntakhab-ut-tawarikh* etc. In Bengal followed this tradition during the 18th century at Murshidabad *niabat*, such as Ghulam Husain Khan Tabatabai’s *Mutaqherin*, Karam Ali’s *Mujaffarnama* etc.⁸⁴ Moreover, people of Bengal, basically elite class, continued to study Abul Fazl, the *Raqat-i-Alamgiri* consisting of the correspondence of Emperor Aurangzeb as well as other *Insha* collections like *Insha-i-Madho-Ram*, *Insha-i-Brahman*, *Insha-i-Munid* etc.⁸⁵

It should be noted here that even the style of composing and writing the orders in Bengal was a legacy of the Mughal Empire. For example, in some Mughal *farmans*, the word ‘*sad*’ could be seen as a thick but incomplete line. When the fair copy of a letter or order was approved by the Emperor, he wrote after the last word of the last line (or a little below it) the letter ‘*sad*’ (abbreviation for *sahih* or correct), as a written token of his approval. The *Subehdars* and the nawabs of Bengal after the Mughals followed the same tradition. Even the zamindars of Bengal did not write their names on letters but followed the word *Shri-Sahih*.⁸⁶ Mughal *farmans* granting lands or favours were always issued as a result of suit paid to a minister or other favourite at court for influencing the Emperor, and the name of such ‘intermediary’ was entered on the back of the *farman* by means of the word ‘*rasalatun*’ (‘through the medium of’). These parallel practices of ancient Hindu inscriptions of land grants giving the name of the intermediary (*dutak*) at the conclusion, or after Mughals in Bengal, clarified the name of the *dutak* on the back of the issuing order.⁸⁷

Bengal's Brahmanical social order and culture had been sustained as well as adopted for many centuries by its connections with a series of Indo-Islamic regimes, particularly in Mughal rule. Many titles are still in use by Bengali Hindu families who identify themselves as Brahmans, Kayasthas and Vaidyas and by others as well, but in actual they received titles such as 'Roy', 'Khan', 'Majumdar', 'Sarkar' or 'Mallik' from the administrations of the sultans they served, sometimes successively for several generations. For this purpose, the strong tradition of Brahman, Kayastha and Vaidya involvement in scribal careers depended not just on following the traditional shastras, but also on more material and worldly languages (like Imperial Persian language) and skills which could open up career opportunities in different kinds of bureaucracies for them. Actually, the Mughal Provincial administration was much more elaborating than the Bengal sultan. Persian, the language of political circles and elite culture in the 'eastern' Islamic world, emerged during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries as a prestigious language, particularly in political and secular contexts. Then the establishment of Mughal rule in Bengal also enshrined the Persian languages, the sole language of government and administration.⁸⁸

During 16th century, the Persian proficiency and experience with the administration opened up the doors for the Government job and status by large numbers of North Indian scribal communities—mostly Kayasthas. Here the family of Raja Pratapaditya of Jessore provides a suitable example. Pratapaditya's grand father, a Kayastha named Ramchandra, left his ancestral home and travelled to southern Bengal, where he secured a modest job in the *qanungo daftar* of *Sarkar* Saptagram. Not only that but also he wanted his son should receive an education in Persian, and later on, at least one of them became an employee of the same *qanungo daftar*. Subsequently, this family moved to Gauda, the capital of Bengal. There, the proficiency in Persian and

prior experience of clerical work made it relatively easy for the adult men of the family to be recruited into various government *daftars*. Next, Srihari and Janakiballabh (father and uncle respectively of Pratapaditya) secured two of the most responsible and highest offices in the government of Sultan Daud Khan Karrani. Then when a conflict between Daud Khan and the Mughal Emperor Akbar started, these brothers took advantage. After the defeat and death of Daud Khan Karrani, these brothers Srihari and Janakiballabh brought zamindari status under their own control. The family histories of Brahman Rajas, such as Lakshmikanta Majumdar and the Raja Nandakumar also well known to their Persian proficiency and, in the case of the latter, to his calligraphic and *insha* writing skills as well.⁸⁹ Historians, like Jadunath Sarkar, Atul Chandra sen etc., argued that “Gradually, the Persian culture infiltrated from *Subehdar’s* court to those of the great Hindu Rajahs- such as the Raja of Nadia and Burdwan.”⁹⁰

During the later Mughals, several administrative units in central and provincial government like accountancy department (*seyaq*), draftsmanship department (*insha*) and offices of revenue minister (*divan*) were loaded by the Kayastha and Khatri scribes, known as *Monshi* or *Moharrir*. Here, Harkaran Das Kambuh came from Multan is the first known Hindu *monshi*. He and his writings were taken as ideals by later *monshis*. Next, Chandra Bhan Brahman was another important *monshi*, rated second only to Abul Fazl. He wrote poetry of high merit. Then followed a large number of Kayastha and Khatri writers, like Mahdo Ram, Sojan Rai, Malekzada, Anand Ram Mokhlis and Bendraban Khwoshgu etc. They made marvellous contributions to the Persian language and literature. Even their writings have used as a part of the syllabus of Persian studies at Muslim *madrassas*. On the philological sciences, the Hindus also produced excellent works such as the *Mer’at al-estelah* by

Anand Ram, the *Bahar-e 'ajam* by Tek Chand Bahar, and the *Moṣṭalaḥat al-sho 'ara* by Seyalkoti Mal Varasta. Persian grammar and commentaries on idioms were also compiled by the Hindus. The phrases and poetical proverbs used by the Hindus show their keen interest in Persian learning, research and other types of derivations in that language. Even the village-based Hindu revenue officials and the other hereditary functionaries and intermediaries regularly followed the accomplishments in the Persian language.⁹¹ The association of Perso-Islamic terms and culture with local religious agencies can still be seen in Bengal. A bilingual Arabic and Sanskrit inscription of the 13th Century mosque (situated in the coastal area of Bengal) was carried these terms and culture. “The Arabic text refers to the deity worshipped in the mosque as Allah, and describes *Nur al-Din* as ‘the king (*sulṭān*) of sea-men, the king of the kings of traders’, and ‘the sun of Islam and the Muslims’. By contrast, the Sanskrit text of the same inscription addresses the supreme god by the names Visvanatha (‘lord of the universe’), Sunyarupa (‘one whose form is of the void’), and Visvarupa (‘having various forms’).”⁹² Another example could be found in *Mangalkabya*. It refers to a large corpus of lesser deities dominated at lower Bengal. For example, tiger god Daksin Ray (“King of the South”), and a Muslim pir named BadaKhan Ghazi (a protector from tiger attacks) etc.⁹³ Here a poem *Ray-Mangala* mentioned a conflict between Daksin Ray and Badi Ghazi Khan, which was lastly resolved by an agent represented as half-Krishna and half-Muhammad.⁹⁴ Then a poet Haji Muhammad identified Hindu God *Niranjan* same *Allah* or *Khoda* or *Gosain*.⁹⁵ Saiyid Murtaza, a poet, addressed the Prophet’s daughter Fatima (Prophet’s daughter) as *Jagat-janani* (‘the mother of the world’).⁹⁶ According to Eaton, Saiyid Sultan (author of *Nabi-Bamsa*) “identified the God of Adam, Abraham, and Moses with *Prabhu* (‘Lord’) or, more frequently, *Niranjan* (‘One without colour’, i.e.,

without qualities).”⁹⁷ Another poet in that time wrote that both Hindu and Muslim during that period would read the *Mahabharata*, the great epic of India. Another reference informed that during this rule, “Muslims being moved to tears on hearing of Rama’s loss of his beloved Sita in the epic *Ramayana*.”⁹⁸ Moreover, during that time, popularised *manngala-kavya* literature and based on that, the worship of a particular deity was started on earth. Like, see the glorious achievements, power, favour of Bengali folk deities like Manasa.⁹⁹ During this period, we also come across the emergence of some folk and rural deities specific to the castes, such as brahmans, vaidyas, kayasthas and some of the lowest castes and tribes. For example, we see the surfacing of deities like Maa Biṣahari (serpent goddesses), Chandi (like Durga), Shasti (the protectors of small children), Sitala Mata (the goddess who protected against smallpox), Kali (the demon-killer), Durga (the killer of the buffalo demon Mahiṣa), Uma (Siva’s wife, another form of Durga).¹⁰⁰ The Sanskrit *upa-puraṇas* discuss the emergence of folk deities- Sakti with Siva, making Siva’s wife Durga or Gouri or Mahamaya. The landowning rajas or self-made gentry of Bengal under the Mughals patronized these Shaktadeities, festivals, temples, literature, and devotees. One of the cited examples is of the goddess-worshipping devotees supported by the noted Sakta enthusiast Raja Krishna Chandra Ray of Nadia (1728-1782 A.D.). His court poets Bharat Chandra Ray and Ramprasad Sen (the first in a long line of folk poets) composed devotional poetry in reverence to Goddesses Kali, Durga, and Uma. The *Annadamangala Kavya* composed by Bhatarchandra Roy described an incident where the Mughal authority trusted the strength of the Folk-Goddess in Bengal.¹⁰¹ Ramprasad Sen composed *Kalikirtan*, *Shamasangit* in reverence of Kali.¹⁰² Man Singh, the Mughal *Subehdar* in Bengal, informed Jahangir of the essential service of one Bhavananda Majumder, on whom the Goddess had

bestowed her blessings, to the founder of the fortunes of the Nadia Rajas in a battle. Man Singh requested the Emperor to offer him (Bhavananda Majumder) a handsome reward. However, the Mughal Padshah not only ignored him but ordered him to throw him into prison by describing the power of the goddess as a 'ghost'. According to this *Kavya*, within few months, the imperial capital faced a serious shortage of food, and many people died of starvation. The *Kavya* attributes this to the anger of the Goddess at the Emperor's denunciation of her and the ill-treatment meted out to Bhavananda. Realizing his 'folley', Jahangir ordered the release of Bhavananda and issued a *farman* bestowing him the title of Raja', along with the right to wear robes (*Khelat*), to fly flags and to have kettle drums played. The Emperor also acknowledged the greatness of the Devi and agreed to worship her. Interestingly, as per the *Kavya*, the Emperor also ordered all the citizens of Delhi to worship the goddess in their own house. Further, the Mughal court also became the venue for the Durga puja subsequently.¹⁰³

Sources referred that from the Ancient period, the proceeding of idol-worship in Hindustan was introduced by the Raias of the kingdom of Bengal who was mighty and of high rank and dignity, and they did not owe allegiance to the Maharajah of Hindustan, who ruled over the throne at Delhi. For instance, during the time of Rai Suraj, a Brahmin – descendent from Noah (the Prophet), coming from the mountains of Jharkhand, entered into his service. He taught the Hindus idol-worship, and preached that everyone preparing gold or silver or stone image of his father and grandfather should devote himself to its worship, and this practise became more common than other practices. In addition, at the present day, in the religious practice of Hindus, the worship of idols, and of the sun, and of fire is very common.¹⁰⁴

Similarly, there are many versions of the history of the cult of the legendary holy man *Satya Pir* in pre-modern Bengal. A text is written by Sankaracharya in 1664 (1062 of Bengali era) identified *Satya Pir* as the son of Sultan Husain Shah's daughter (ruler of Gour). Then a poem composed by Krsnahari Dasa explained, "Satya Pir would be born on the earth in the womb of goddess Chand bibi, in order to redress all human ills in Kaliyuga." Though the poet was a Hindu he begins his poem with invocations to Allah. So, both of the writers identified *Satya Pir* as a Muslim. Other texts and Bengali poems totally ignored the Muhammadan element of *Satya Pir* and identified *Satya Pir* with the divinity of *Satya Narayan*, who was a form of the Brahmanic god Vishnu.¹⁰⁵ According to Dinesh Chandra Sen, "When the two communities mixed so closely, and were so greatly influenced by one another, the result was that a common God was called into existence, worshipped by the Hindus and the Mohammedans alike. His name was formed by compounding an Arabic word with a Sanskrit word. He was called *Satya-pir*."¹⁰⁶ Eaton described that "it was at this time that Muslims ceased worshipping *Satya Pir*, while *Satya Narayan* became identified as an exclusively Hindu deity worshipped only by Hindus."¹⁰⁷ So the *Satya Pir* cult as a hybrid cult was synthesized by Hindus and Muslims. During the late 15th and 16th Century, the worship of *Satya Narayana* was embedded in the social and cultural environment of Bengal. Sultan Allauddin Hussain Shah and his successor preceded Akbar in encouraging the growth of an eclectic culture based on traditional indigenous religious beliefs and rituals as well as the lately arrived Islamic ideas and legends. Historians like Dinesh Chandra Sen mentioned "...in Orissa, *Satya Narayan* and *Satya Pir* are reckoned as the same God, they do not appear to be identical in Bengal. There is not a single village in Bengal where *Satya Narayan* is not worshipped once a week, but in these *pujas* the Mahommedans do not join with the

Hindus.” In Mughal Bengal, many poems on *Satya Pir* were written in Bengali like- *Satya-pirer Pancali* by Fakir Chand, *Satya-pir* by Ramananda, and *Satya-pir* by Shankaracharya etc.¹⁰⁸

The Arabian Islam has greatly influenced the spread of Islam and subsequent movements in Bengal and the Muslim world at large. Some record informed us that “...Bengali Muslims ...aware of the beliefs and practices then current in the Arab heartland, and that they attempted to integrate those beliefs and practices into their identity as Muslims”¹⁰⁹ For example, the *Nabi-Bam̃sa*, the ambitious literary effort of Saiyid Sultan, a “national religious epic” for Bengali Muslims. Here the writer compared the major Hindu deities like Brahma, Vishnu, Siva, Rama, and Krishna “as successive prophets of God, followed in turn by Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, Jesus, and Muhammad.”¹¹⁰ There goes a story about the Prophets of Noah and his successors, who were responsible for colonizing the country and each place which were known by their names. Historians have narrated that “when Ham, son of Noh (Noah)- the prophet, with the permission of his holy father, set himself to colonize the south, he girded up his loin for accomplishing this, and deputed his sons – the first of whom was Hind, the second Sind, the third Habash, the fourth Zanaj, the fifth Barbar, and the sixth Nubah – in all directions on colonizing expeditions. In addition, the tract that each of them colonized was called after him. The eldest son, Hind, having come to the country of Hindustan, hence it was so named after him. Similarly, Sind, in the company of his elder brother, having set himself to colonize the tract of Sind established himself there, which was named after him. But Hind had four sons, the first was Purab, the second was Bang, the third was Dakin, and the fourth was Naharwal. It is believed that every tract that was colonized by each of them is still named after them. Dakin, the son of Hind, on whom the country of Dakin was named,

had three sons among whom the area was distributed. The names of Dakin's sons were Marhat, Kanar, and Talang. The *Dakhinans* are all believed to be descended from them, and up to this time, all the three tribes dominate there. On the other hand, Naharwal had three sons, namely, Babruj, Kanoj, and Malraj, who went on to found cities on their names. Purab, who was the eldest son of Hind, on the other hand, had forty-two sons, and, within a short time, their descendants multiplied and colonized different countries. When they became numerous, they raised one of themselves to be the chief and to look after the management of the realm. And Bang, the son of Hind, getting children born to him, colonized the country of Bengal.”¹¹¹

During the 15th-16th century, some authors like Saiyad Sultan, with Sufi notions of divine activity, mixed with Hindu believers. He explained, “After expressing the *Vaishnava* sentiment that Krishna had been created ‘in order to manifest love (*keli*) at Vrindavan’, the poet expressed the Sufi sentiments that God (*‘Niranjan’*) used to enjoy his own self by gazing at his reflected image in a mirror, and that before creating the sky and the angels he had created the “Light of Muhammad” (*Nur-i Muḥammad*).” He identified the Arabic *nabi* with the Sanskrit *avatar* like the Prophet Muhammad's son-in-law Ali identified with the tenth of Vishnu's *avatars*.¹¹² The ideology of *wahdat al-wajud* traditions influenced the politico-religious climate in Mughal India. So that the *khanqah* of Sheykh Ahmad ‘Abd al-Haq entitled as “clearing house” of popular Hindu *Yogis* and *Sanyasis*.

Moreover, during the mid-sixteenth century the *Ḥaqayeq-e Hindi* of Abd al-Vahed Bilgrami flourished a sentiment, in where reconcile the *Vaishnava* symbols and Hindu philosophy with orthodox Muslim beliefs. Here Bilgrami explained that Krishna and other names used in Hindu spiritual song symbolized Prophet Mohammad, as the reality of human being (*ḥaqiqat-e insan*). He compared Braj and Gokul with different

Sufic notions of the world (*alam*), the Yamuna and the Ganga river stood for the sea of *vahdat* (unity), the ocean of *ma'refat* (gnosis) or still the river of *hads* (origination) and *emkan* (contingent or potential existence). “*Murli* (Krishna’s flute) in the *Haqayeq-e Hindi* represented the appearance of entity out of non-entity and so on.”¹¹³

As the proportion of the Muslim population grew in Bengal, the primary goal of the *Sufis* slowly started changing. Their main mission to propagate Islamic message gradually become to fade, and from this time, the growing number of shrines or *dargah/rawya/madrassa* as symbols assumed popular dimensions, which attracted common people for the veneration of saints. In this process, most of the *Sufi* traditions lost their importance on moral virtues and spiritual training.¹¹⁴ Under such circumstances, a new class of Muslim saints, known as *pirs*, gradually started appearing, who sought devotion from the uneducated folks. The nature of this kind of folks was more pantheistic towards Islam. This new class was very much attached to the ruling authority, and on that basis, many *dargahs* turned into a lucrative source of revenue for the *pirs*. They also accepted various economic favours from the state (*madad-i-ma'ash* or *inams*). “*Pir*, a Persian word, denotes a ‘mystic guide’ (Shah, Sheikh, Murshid, or Usthad) who initiates disciples or *murid* into mystic orders.” *Pir* worship was a form of joint worship of the Hindus and Muslims in Medieval Bengal. The large settlements of foreign Muslims in Bengal, and the worship of local deities, etc., further contributed to the growth and importance of the *Pirs* as an institution. The influence of the *Vaisnavas*, in the meanwhile, was also gradually fading over the Hindu society. All these factors contributed to the Hindu-Muslim cultural synthesis, which was also manifested through the worship of numerous *Pirs* like, Satya *Pir*, Manik *Pir*, Kalu *Ghazi*, Bara Khan *Ghazi* etc. by the Bengali populace.¹¹⁵ Such religious movements, thus, had their firm roots in the Bengali society consisting of

both Hindus and Muslims. The religious enthusiasm, thus generated among the masses, was subsequently transforming the older Brahmanical religion.¹¹⁶ During Mughal Bengal, we had seen a vast development in the intellectual life of the Bengal people. The emergence of Nabadwipa (glory of Bengal), which was ‘a far-famed seat of learning’ mainly Sanskrit, and the new system of Hindu logic known as *Navya Nyaya*, both belong in this period.¹¹⁷ Similarly, the Mughal *Subehdarsin* Bengal preferred the Ayurvedic or native Indian medical system. For example, Islam Khan (*Subehdar* of Bengal during the reign of Jahangir), requested for being treated by an Indian physician. However, as there was none available of Indian physician near him, ‘so he made signs to Muslim Hakim Qudsi to treat him’. And when illness gripped Mirza Nathan, a physician named Kabiraj came and treated him. That physician “...having looked at the stars of that youth and in one of the most auspicious moments, mixed two *mashas* of a deadly poisonous drug with the juice of ginger and lemon...”¹¹⁸ According to Eaton, such faith in the Indian (native) systems of medical therapy and an adoption of the Rajput custom of *Jauhar* during an imminent annihilation in battle— “both of them life-threatening situations— suggests how thoroughly Indian values had penetrated Mughal culture...”¹¹⁹

Actually, Islam did not impress the bulk of the Indian population as a superior religious or cultural force, nor produced ‘a revolutionary’ effect on the Hindu religious thought and practices. On the contrary, it has been argued that the *Bhakti* movement was an outcome of direct contact between Hinduism and Islam and that this movement increased the confidence of the Hindu masses in their own faith and stopped large-scale conversions to Islam. The presence of Islam made the Hindus more orthodox and conservative in their religious outlook and social customs. The caste system became still more rigid, and the evils of child marriage and infanticide

found their way into the Hindu society as a negative impact of the aggressiveness of the Muslim conquerors. According to Muhammad Yasin, in Muslim society, “The system of *Purdah* was strictly observed, and no decent women came out in public except clothed in *burqa*, and too very rarely.”¹²⁰ Akbar made the use of *burqa*, an obligatory tradition in Muslim society.¹²¹ According to Badauni, “...if a young women were found running about the lanes and bazars of the town, and while so doing either did not veil herself, or allowed herself to become unveiled, or if a woman was worthless and deceitful and quarreled with her husband, she was to go the quarter of the prostitutes, and take up the profession.”¹²² This Muslim system was adopted by the women of the upper strata of the Hindus. Although the Mughals interfered little with the Hindu customs, but they tried to stop the evil practice of *sati* completely. It was a custom of Hindu widows mainly belonging to the higher castes. After the death of their husband, Hindu widows burning themselves in their husband’s funeral pyres. Mughal Emperor Akbar and Jahangir had issued several orders prohibiting this evil tradition.¹²³ Even Aurangzeb was most constant in his ambition to stop *sati*. According to Manucci, when Aurangzeb returned from Kashmir in December 1663, “...the Brahmans went to complain that the soldiers did not allow women to be burnt, in accordance with their custom. The king issued an order that in all lands under Mogul control, never again should the officials allow a woman to be burnt”.¹²⁴ “In his eighth regnal year, orders were issued prohibiting the processions of prostitutes.”¹²⁵ Mohammad Yasin concluded the impact of Hinduism and the indigenous culture on the Indian Muslims in his book *A Social History of Islamic India (1605-1784)*. He writes: “During the period under review we hardly come across any facts to justify the view that the Muslims constituted a distinct *nation* by themselves....The Muslim community of India was essentially an integral part of the Indian people having much

more in common with other people of India than with those outside India....The great redeeming feature of the life of the Muslim community of Hindustan....that they had much fewer points of a quarrel with other communities than those of later times. Beneath the turmoil of political confusion the even tenure of the Indianization of the Muslim community continued uninterrupted...On the whole, the wholesome principle of 'give and take' in the cultural life of India continued undisturbed, and Muslims had less prejudice to import silently colourful Hindu customs in birth, and marriage festivities of their own, and to partake of the mirth and joy of gay Hindu festivals, like *Holi* and *Hindola* (Swinging in the rainy season).¹²⁶ In the *Manasa Mangala*, we come across an interesting passage wherein the steel house made for one Laksmidhara had, along with other charms, to ward off evil influences a copy of the Holy Quran. A Muslim is said to be offering *puja* at a Hindu temple, and a Hindu offering *sinni* at mosques. Mirza Hosen Ali at Tippera district composed songs in praise of the Goddess *Kali* and worshipped her at his house. In addition, there are records pointing towards the fact that, like the Hindus, the Muslims also performed all the ceremonies of life, from birth to death. For example, when a child is born, the songs sung are not of Muslim conceptions but are those in which allusions to Lord *Sri Krishna* are frequent. Many ceremonies performed during pregnancy were also adopted by Hindus. To add more colour and festivities to marriage functions, the Muslims further adopted a series of rituals performed by the Hindus. The Muslims of Rajshahi have the monopoly of Bhasangan or songs of *Manasadevi*. In Chittagong, Hamidulla wrote a Bengali poem *Behula Sundari*, wherein the Bramins consulted the Holy Quran to find out an auspicious day for the hero's journey abroad.¹²⁷

During the Mughal Bengal, "a large number of poets, both Hindus and Muslims of different places of East Bengal, composed lyric poems (*gitikas*) regarding the sorrows

and joys of village people”. In particular, the *Purba Banga Gitika* and *Mymansingh Gitika* witness close relations between Hindus and Muslims.¹²⁸ According to Kumkum Chatterjee, “...the same Rajas and zamindars who studied Persian and had carefully cultivated Persian tastes in literature, music and formal attire, in their respective public lives portrayed themselves as the upholders and adherents of Brahmanism. They supported the Brahmans and Brahmanical scholarship, built temples, consecrated deities, and some among them even held Vedic sacrifices. Most of them had knowledge of Persian, Sanskrit, Bengali and Nagri. The network of Persian schools they supported was supplemented by a co-existing network of Sanskrit tools”. This resulted in the generation of a complex cultural environment in Bengal under the Mughal rule, which was predicated upon a critical balance between Persianization on the one hand and Brahmanical traditions on the other.¹²⁹ The Mughal impact in many places of Bengal was evident to such a great extent that the Hindu and Muslim could be found dining together on occasions. According to an eighteenth-century text *Riyaz-S-Salatin*, in Orissa, the Hindus, unlike their practice elsewhere, dined together (*tarani*) with the Muslims before proceeding to worship Lord Jagganath.¹³⁰

¹Siddique, Mohammad Yousuf, *Epigraphy and Islamic Culture: Inscriptions of the Early Muslim Rulers of Bengal (1205-1494)*, London: Taylor and Francis Ltd., 2016, pp. 4-5.

²Ibid, p. 5.

³Ibid, p. 20. See also, Rahaman, Md. Shah Noorur, “Islam and the Early Introduction in Bengal” in *Proceedings of the Indian History Congress*, 56, 1995, pp. 432-33.

⁴Chatterjee, Anjali, *Bengal in the Reign of Aurangzeb (1658-1707 A.D)*, Calcutta: Progressive, 1967, p. 5.

⁵Ghulam Husain Salim, *Riyazu-S-Salatin (A History of Bengal)*, trans. Maulavi Abdus Salam, Calcutta: Asiatic Society, 1902, p. 9.

⁶Ibid.

⁷Bosworth, Clifford Edmind, *The Islamic Dynasties (A Chronological and Genealogical Handbook)*, North America: Aldine Publishing Company, 1967, pp.194-95, See also, Chatterjee, *Bengal in the Reign of Aurangzeb (1658-1707 A.D)*, p. 1.

⁸*Riyazu-S-Salatin (A History of Bengal)*, tr. Maulavi Abdus Salam, p. 7.

⁹Ibid.

¹⁰*Ain-i-Akbari*, tr. H. S. Jarrett, ed. Jadunath Sarkar, Vol. II, Calcutta: Asiatic Society of Bengal, 1949, p. 141.

¹¹Ibid, p. 127-128.

¹²Chatterjee, *Bengal in the Reign of Aurangzeb (1658-1707 A.D)*, pp. 7-9.

¹³Ibid, p. 40.

¹⁴Eaton, Richard. M., *The Rise of Islam and the Bengal Frontier: 1204-1760*, London: University of California Press, 1993, p. 159.

¹⁵Khan, Iqtidar Alam, "The Nobility under Akbar and the Development of His Religious Policy (1560-80)" in *The Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland*, No. 1/2, April, 1968, www.jstor.org, retrieved on 16th August, 2014, p. 34.

¹⁶Eaton, *The Rise of Islam and the Bengal Frontier: 1204-1760*, p. 162.

¹⁷Ibid, p. 163.

¹⁸Ibid, p. 165.

¹⁹Ibid, p. 166.

²⁰Mirza Nathan, *Baharistan-i-Ghaybi (A History of Mughal Wars in Assam, Cooch Behar, Bengal, Bihar and Orissa during the Reign of Jahangir and Shahjahan)*, trans. M. I. Bohra, Vol I, Assam: Department of Historical and Antiquarian Studies, Narayani Handiqui Historical Institute, 1936, p. 440.

²¹Siddique, *Epigraphy and Islamic Culture: Inscriptions of the Early Muslim Rulers of Bengal (1205-1494)*, p. 24.

²²*Riyazu-S-Salatin (A History of Bengal)*, tr. Maulavi Abdus Salam, p. 25.

²³*Ain-i-Akbari*, trans. H. S. Jarrett, ed. Jadunath Sarkar, Vol. II, p. 135.

²⁴*Riyazu-S-Salatin (A History of Bengal)*, tr. Maulavi Abdus Salam, pp. 25-26.

²⁵*Ibid*, p. 39.

²⁶*Ibid*, p. 44.

²⁷*Ibid*, p. 28.

²⁸Ali, Muhammad Mohar, *History of the Muslims of Bengal*, vol. I A, *Muslim Rule in Bengal: 600-1170/1203-1757*, Riyadh: Iman Muhammad Ibn Sa'ud Islamic University, 1985, p. 39.

²⁹Siddique, *Epigraphy and Islamic Culture: Inscriptions of the Early Muslim Rulers of Bengal (1205-1494)*, p. 25. Later from the 18th century, the *bhadrolok* or elite people of Bengal (Hindu version of *ashraf*) replaced the Muslim *ashraf* and held most of the administrative and other official posts.

³⁰Eaton, *The Rise of Islam and the Bengal Frontier: 1204-1760*, p. 233.

³¹Adam, Natiq Jama, *Kitab-al-Salaat (The Book of Prayer)*, Riyadh: Presidency of Islamic Research, 21st May, 1991, p. 110. Performance of the Prayer together with the other Muslims in congregation at Mosques is a duty required from every male Muslim of sound mind.

³²Siddique, *Epigraphy and Islamic Culture: Inscriptions of the Early Muslim Rulers of Bengal (1205-1494)*, p. 33.

³³Adam, *Kitab-al-Salaat (The Book of Prayer)*, p. 5.

³⁴Siddique, *Epigraphy and Islamic Culture: Inscriptions of the Early Muslim Rulers of Bengal (1205-1494)*, pp. 33-36. Followed *Masjid al-Nabaw*, the earliest mosque of the Prophet. See Also, Alam, Ishrat and Syed Ijaz Hussain (eds.), *The Varied Facets of History: Essays in Honour of Aniruddha Ray*, Primus Books, Delhi, 2011, p. 128.

³⁵*Mughal Architecture in Bangladesh*, azaryas2sial.blogspot.com, retrieved on 15th November, 2019.

³⁶Eaton, *The Rise of Islam and the Bengal Frontier: 1204-1760*, p. 171.

³⁷Ibid, pp. 172-73.

³⁸Yusuf, Ananta, *The Myths of Lalbagh Fort*, www.dailystar.net, retrieved on 20 September 2013.

³⁹Eaton, *The Rise of Islam and the Bengal Frontier: 1204-1760*, p. 173.

⁴⁰Ibid, p. 230.

⁴¹Ibid, p. 268. Also see, Adam, *Kitab-al-Salaat (The Book of Prayer)*, p. 51.

⁴²Eaton, *The Rise of Islam and the Bengal Frontier: 1204-1760*, p. 230

⁴³Roychoudhury, Makhanlal, *The Din-i-Ilahi or The Religion of Akbar*, Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal, 4th Edition 1997, p. 222.

⁴⁴Ibid, p. 252.

⁴⁵Siddique, *Epigraphy and Islamic Culture: Inscriptions of the Early Muslim Rulers of Bengal (1205-1494)*, p. 62.

⁴⁶Eaton, *The Rise of Islam and the Bengal Frontier: 1204-1760*, p. 264.

⁴⁷Siddique, *Epigraphy and Islamic Culture: Inscriptions of the Early Muslim Rulers of Bengal (1205-1494)*, p. 38.

⁴⁸Ibid.

⁴⁹Alam, Ishrat and Syed Ijaz Hussain (eds.), *The Varied Facets of History: Essays in Honour of Aniruddha Ray*, pp. 137-38.

⁵⁰Ibid, p. 136.

⁵¹Siddique, *Epigraphy and Islamic Culture: Inscriptions of the Early Muslim Rulers of Bengal (1205-1494)*, pp. 38-39.

⁵²Nizami, K.A, *Some Aspects of Religion and politics in India During the Thirteenth Century*, Aligrah: Department of History, 1961, p. 36. Such schools of Jurisprudence were the Hamafite, the Malikite, the Shafi'ite, the Hanbalite.

⁵³*Ain-i-Akbari*, tr. H. Blochmann, Vol. I, p. 279. Three-fold division of sciences like *Ilahi* or divine comprise everything connected with theology and the means of acquiring knowledge

of God; *Riyazi* treat of quantity and comprise mathematics, astronomy, music, mechanics; *Tabi* comprehend physical sciences.

⁵⁴Chopra, Pran Nath, *Some Aspects of Society and Culture during the Mughal Age (1526-1707)*, Agra: Shiva Lal Agarwala and Co. (p.) Ltd., 1963, p. 155.

⁵⁵*Ain-i-Akbari*, tr. H. Blochmann, Vol. I, p. 279. Also see, Chopra, *Some Aspects of Society and Culture during the Mughal Age (1526-1707)*, p. 155.

⁵⁶Chopra, *Some Aspects of Society and Culture during the Mughal Age (1526-1707)*, p. 156.

⁵⁷*Ibid*, p. 154. Also see, Siddique, *Epigraphy and Islamic Culture: Inscriptions of the Early Muslim Rulers of Bengal (1205-1494)*, p. 51.

⁵⁸Chopra, *Some Aspects of Society and Culture during the Mughal Age (1526-1707)*, p. 154.

⁵⁹*Ibid*, pp. 148-49.

⁶⁰*Ain-i-Akbari*, tr. H. S. Jarett, ed. Jadunath Sarkar, Vol. II, p. 134.

⁶¹Roy, Atul Chandra, *History of Bengal (Mughal Period: 1526-1765 A.D.)*, Calcutta: Nababharat Publishers, 1968, p. 468.

⁶²Grover, Verinder, *Bangladesh: Government and Politics*, New Delhi: Deep and Deep Publications Pvt. Lmt., 2000, p. 56.

⁶³Baul, Pritish Kumar, *The Society of Bengal in the Mughal Period*, wikieducator.org, retrieved on 30th May, 2008.

⁶⁴*Muntakhbu-T Tawarikh*, tr. George S. A. Ranking, Vol. II, p. 311.

⁶⁵Sangar, Satya Prakash, *Crime and Punishment in Mughal India*, Delhi: Sterling Publishers, 1967, p. 164.

⁶⁶Grover, *Bangladesh: Government and Politics*, p. 54.

⁶⁷Stephen P, *Time in Early Modern Islam: Calender, Ceremony, and Chronology in the Safavid, Mughal, and Ottoman Empire*, Cambridge University Press, 2013, p. 89.

⁶⁸Baul, *The Society of Bengal in the Mughal Period*, wikieducator.org, retrieved on 30th May, 2008.

⁶⁹Nath, R, *Private Life of the Mughals of India: 1526-1803A.D*, New Delhi: Rupa publications India Pvt. Ltd., 2003, p. 55.

⁷⁰Baul, *The Society of Bengal in the Mughal Period*, wikieducator.org, retrieved on 30th May, 2008.

⁷¹Khansir, Ali Akbar and Nasrin Mozafari, *The Impact of Persian Language on Indian Language*, www.academypublication.com, retrieved on 3rd June, 2011.

⁷²Grover, *Bangladesh: Government and Politics*, pp. 55-56.

⁷³Dasgupta, Atis, “The Baul and Their Heretic Tradition” in *SocialScientist*, 22 (5/6), May-June 1994, p. 73. See also, Sen, Dinesh Chandra, *History of Bengali Language and Literature* (A series of lectures delivered as Reader to the Calcutta University), Calcutta: Published by the University, 1911, pp. 397-98 and Grover, *Bangladesh: Government and Politics*, p. 55

⁷⁴Alam, Muzaffar, “State Building under the Mughals: Religion, Culture and Politics” in *Centre for Historical studies*, 9 (3/4), 1997, p. 107.

⁷⁵Grover, *Bangladesh: Government and Politics*, p. 55.

⁷⁶Alam, Ishrat and Syed Ijaz Hussain (eds.), *The Varied Facets of History: Essays in Honour of Aniruddha Ray*, p. 133.

⁷⁷Siddique, *Epigraphy and Islamic Culture: Inscriptions of the Early Muslim Rulers of Bengal (1205-1494)*, p. 42. See also, Alam, Ishrat and Syed Ijaz Hussain (eds.), *The Varied Facets of History: Essays in Honour of Aniruddha Ray*, p. 130.

⁷⁸Ahmad, Imtiaz, “The Mughal Governors of Bihar and Their Public Works” in *Preceedings of the Indian History Congress*, 59, 1998, p. 388.

⁷⁹Chatterjee, Kumkum, “Scribal elites in Sultanate and Mughal Bengal” in *The Indian Economic and Social History Review*, 47(4), 2010, p. 462.

⁸⁰*Influence of Persian on Bengali Language and Literature*, www.academypublication.com, retrieved on 2014.

⁸¹Chatterjee, Kumkum, “Scribal elites in Sultanate and Mughal Bengal”, *The Indian Economic and Social History Review*, p. 463. Also see, Chatterjee, Kumkum, “The

Persianization of *Itihasa*: Performance, Naratives and Mughal Political Culture in Eighteen-Century Bengal” in *The Journal of Asian Studies*, 76 (2), 2008, p. 536.

⁸²Chatterjee, Kumkum, “The Persianization of *Itihasa*: Performance, Naratives and Mughal Political Culture in Eighteen-Century Bengal” in *The Journal of Asian Studies*, p. 537.

⁸³Chatterjee, Kumkum, “Scribal elites in Sultanate and Mughal Bengal”, *The Indian Economic and Social History Review*, p. 463. Also see, Chaterjee, Kumkum, “The Persianization of *Itihasa*: Performance, Naratives and Mughal Political Culture in Eighteen-Century Bengal” in *The Journal of Asian Studies*, p. 537.

⁸⁴Chatterjee, Kumkum, “The Persianization of *Itihasa*: Performance, Naratives and Mughal Political Culture in Eighteen-Century Bengal” in *The Journal of Asian Studies*, p. 538.

⁸⁵Chatterjee, Kumkum, “Scribal elites in Sultanate and Mughal Bengal”, *The Indian Economic and Social History Review*, p. 462.

⁸⁶Sarkar, Jadunath, *Mughal Administration*, Calcutta: M. C. Sarkar and Sons, 1935, p. 231.

⁸⁷*Ibid*, p. 232.

⁸⁸Chatterjee, Kumkum, “Scribal elites in Sultanate and Mughal Bengal”, *The Indian Economic and Social History Review*, pp. 452–53.

⁸⁹*Ibid*, pp. 460-61.

⁹⁰Sarkar, Jadunath, *History of Bengal (Muslim Period: 1200-1757A.D)*, Vol. II, Ramna, Dacca: The University of Dacca, 1948, p. 223. See also, Roy, Atul Chandra, *History of Bengal (Mughal Period: 1526-1765 A.D)*, p. 461.

⁹¹Alam, Muzaffar, “State Building under the Mughals: Religion, Culture and Politics” in *Centre for Historical studies*, pp. 105-28.

⁹²Eaton, *The Rise of Islam and the Bengal Frontier: 1204-1760*, p. 275.

⁹³Chatterjee, Kumkum, “The Persianization of *Itihasa*: Performance, Naratives and Mughal Political Culture in Eighteen-Century Bengal” in *The Journal of Asian Studies*, p. 517. Also see, Eaton, *The Rise of Islam and the Bengal Frontier: 1204-1760*, p. 270.

⁹⁴Eaton, *The Rise of Islam and the Bengal Frontier: 1204-1760*, p. 270.

⁹⁵Roy, Asim, *Islam in the Environment of Medieval Bengal (With Special reference to Bengali Sources)*, The Australian National University, March, 1970, p. 194, openresearch-repository.anu.edu.au, retrieved on 19th May, 2020.

⁹⁶Ibid, p. 299.

⁹⁷Eaton, *The Rise of Islam and the Bengal Frontier: 1204-1760*, p. 276

⁹⁸Ibid, p. 277.

⁹⁹Ibid.

¹⁰⁰Nanda, J. N, *Bengal: The Unique State*, New Delhi: Concept Publisher, 2005, p. 99 and Chatterjee, Kumkum, “The Persianization of *Itihasa*: Performance, Naratives and Mughal Political Culture in Eighteen-Century Bengal” in *The Journal of Asian Studies*, p. 517.

¹⁰¹Chatterjee, Kumkum, “Goddess encounters: Mughals, Monsters and Goddess in Bengal”, *Modern Asian Studies*, 47 (5), 12th March, 2013, pp. 1458-59.

¹⁰²Mc Dermott, Rachal Fell, *Mother of My Heart, Daughter of My Dreams: Kali and Uma in the Devotional poetry of Bengal*, Oxford University Press, 2001, p. 66.

¹⁰³Chatterjee, Kumkum, “Goddess encounters: Mughals, Monsters and Goddess in Bengal” in *Modern Asian Studies*, 47 (5), pp. 1- 53, 2013, pp. 1460-61.

¹⁰⁴Riyazu-S-Salatin (*A History of Bengal*), tr. Maulavi Abdus Salam, pp. 52-54.

¹⁰⁵Sen, Dineshchandra, *The Folk-Literature of Bengal*, University of Calcutta, 1920, pp. 99-102.

¹⁰⁶Sen, *History of Bengali Language and Literature*, p. 796.

¹⁰⁷Eaton, *The Rise of Islam and the Bengal Frontier: 1204-1760*, p. 280.

¹⁰⁸Sen, *History of Bengali Language and Literature*, pp. 796-97. See also, Yamin, *Impact of Islam on Orissan Culture*, New Delhi: Readworthy Publications (P) Ltd, 2009. pp. 59-60.

¹⁰⁹Eaton, *The Rise of Islam and the Bengal Frontier: 1204-1760*, p. 283.

¹¹⁰Ibid, pp. 285-86.

¹¹¹Riyazu-S-Salatin (*A History of Bengal*), tr. Maulavi Abdus Salam, pp. 19-20.

¹¹²Eaton, *The Rise of Islam and the Bengal Frontier: 1204-1760*, p.288.

¹¹³Alam, Muzaffar, “State Building under the Mughals: Religion, Culture and Politics” in *Centre for Historical Studies*, pp. 123-24.

¹¹⁴Siddique, *Epigraphy and Islamic Culture: Inscriptions of the Early Muslim Rulers of Bengal (1205-1494)*, p. 42.

¹¹⁵Rahman, Md. Shah Noorur, “Religious and Cultural Syncretism in Medieval Bengal” in *The Nehu Journal*, 16 (1), January-June, 2018, pp. 55-56.

¹¹⁶Mehta, *Advanced Study in the History of Medieval India*, Vol. III, pp. 297-98.

¹¹⁷Sen, *History of Bengali Language and Literature*, p. 409.

¹¹⁸Mirza Nathan, *Baharistan-i-Ghaybi (A History of Mughal Wars in Assam, Cooch Behar, Bengal, Bihar and Orissa during the Reign of Jahangir and Shahjahan)*, trans. M. I. Bohra, Vol. I, p. 256, 322, 324

¹¹⁹Eaton, *The Rise of Islam and the Bengal Frontier: 1204-1760*, pp. 166-67.

¹²⁰Yasin, Mohammad, *A Social History of Islamic India (1605-1748)*, Lucknow: The Upper India Publishing House Ltd., 1958, p. 122.

¹²¹*Ibid.*

¹²²Abul-Qadir Ibn-I-Muluk Shah or Al-Badaoni, *Muntakhbu-T Tawarikh*, trans. George S. A. Ranking, Vol. II, p. 405.

¹²³Sharma, Sri Ram, *The Religious Policy of the Mughal Emperors*, London: Asia Publishing House, 1972, p. 43, 93.

¹²⁴Manucci, Niccolao, *Storia Do Mogor or Mogul India, 1653-1708*, trans. William Irvine, Vol. II, London: Royal Asiatic Society, 1907, p. 97. Also see, Jadunath Sarkar, *History of Aurangzeb (Northern India, 1658-1681)*, Vol. III, Calcutta: M. C. Sarkar and Sons, 1928, p. 92.

¹²⁵Husain, Zeeshan, *Position of Women in Medieval India*, www.groundxero.in retrieved on 24th October 2019. See also Sharma, *The Religious Policy of the Mughal Emperors*, p. 131.

¹²⁶Yasin, *A Social History of Islamic India (1605-1748)*, pp. 178-81.

¹²⁷Sen, *History of Bengali Language and Literature*, pp. 792-96.

¹²⁸Rahman, “Religious and Cultural Syncretism in Medieval Bengal” in *The Nehu Journal*, p. 69.

¹²⁹Chatterjee, Kumkum, “Scribal elites in Sultanate and Mughal Bengal” in *The Indian Economic and Social History Review*, p. 464.

¹³⁰*Riyazu-S-Salatin (A History of Bengal)*, tr. Maulavi Abdus Salam, pp. 15-19.

CHAPTER-VII

Conclusion

The Mughal administration penetrated the Indian lives in three phases: (1) Collision (2) Mutual Appreciation (3) Imitation or process of Assimilation, while ensuring that it mostly pursued the traditions of the independent Hindu regimes. In the words of J. N. Sarkar, "The Mughal Administration presented a combination of Indian and extra-Indian elements; or, more correctly, it was the Perso-Arabic System in Indian setting."¹ In addition, in administration, there was no discrimination based on class-caste. The Mughals were never theocratic and never Islamic; they were compassionate, just and firm paternalistic. It is because of this reason, as argued in the second and fourth chapters, that Medieval Bengal and most of the conquered provinces of the Mughals had neither any authoritative nor any continuous contemporary socio-cultural historiography.

The Mughal Rulers made a few laws of their own. The Ancient Eastern tradition that the king should try cases himself in open court remained the main feature of Mughal administration. Whereas Akbar and Jahangir followed this tract, both Shah Jahan and Aurangzeb held no public *darbar* on Wednesday but reserved that day for having a court of law. "The Emperor came directly from the *jharokha darshan* to the *diwan-i-khas* (or the Hall of Private Audience) at about eight in the morning and sat on the throne of justice till the midday. The hall used to be full of the lawofficers of the Crown, the judges of the Canon Law (*qazis*), judges of Common Law (*adils*), muftis, theologians (*ulema*), jurists learned in precedents (*fatawa*), the superintendent of the law-court (*darogha-i-adalat*), and the *kotwal* or prefect of the city police."² For controlling *suba's* administration, "Every *Subehdars* tried to play the Padishah in his

own province”.³ So, it proved that they brought new rules in their court and government policies.

Under the Mughal dominance in Bengal, the ideal of Islamization and the realities of local social systems consummately accommodated each other and created a new point that intuitively grasped by the common. The religious ordinance, political authority, social activities all make a positive utilization of its natural, political, religious and cultural forces in Bengal. It can be said that their (Mughals) mutual give and take aspect had been effective not from the theoretical perspective, but the social perspective, as in the part of the way of life, and changed the pre historiography of Bengal. From the foregoing chapters, it was crystal clear to us that since the advent of the Mughals in Bengal, developed a new tradition and culture (appreciated both Hindu-Muslim culture) in Society. Islam appeared in Bengal as the religion of commoners, on the other side development of Bengal’s regional tradition of goddess worship (in Hindu society). Popular perceptions and most of the liberal orders followed by the Mughals—particularly Emperor Akbar, went a long way towards strengthening the impression amongst Hindu subjects that the imperial government was sympathetic to their cultural-religious practices, and secondly, maybe even encouraged public displays of religion. If one goes to primary sources of the Mughal period like Babur’s *Babur Nama*, Abul Fazl’s *Ain-i-Akbari* and *Akbarnama*, Jahangir’s *Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri*, Letters of Aurangzeb etc., they would found that the Mughals were not able to follow Islamic laws in absolute terms. They have followed the king’s prerogatives in constructing Imperial orders. The fourth chapter discussed those specific orders very deeply, and it proved the cultural life of Bengal was affected by the activities of the Mughals. Here one reference, I have gone through that Aurangzeb, who followed Islamic laws strictly, prohibited Hindu tax on bathing in the

Ganges and other holy rivers, tax on carrying of the bones of dead Hindus for being thrown into the Ganges.

On the basis of the research findings, it may be concluded that there were two spheres of Mughal influences which flamed the culture of Bengal: 1) Day to day way of life, and 2) Festivals and ceremonies/rituals. The festivals may further be seen as belonging to two kinds: (1) Social, i.e., mostly ceremonial/ritualistic like child's birth, marriages, death rituals like *Shradha* or *Chalisha/Chehlam* (funeral rites/ obsequies) etc. (2) Religious, pertaining to both Islam and Hinduism. For example, the Islamic festivals like Shabebarat, Muharram, Eid, etc. and Hindu festivals associated with various deities like Durga, Kali and other folk gods and goddesses. At the same time, a major contribution of the Mughal Government in Bengal could be seen in the field of education and learning, which was moulded in the direction that was based on Persian language and culture. Persian became the official language in Bengal. As a result, the revenue officials (both Hindus and Muslims, whose mother tongue was Bengali) had to learn Persian as the records were maintained in that language.⁴ Next, with the expansion of Mughal rule in Bengal, a large number of educated and cultured Muslims came to Bengal as officials of various ranks along with the *Subehdars*. The upper-class, cultured Muslims, in turn, settled down in Bengal and introduced a new, sophisticated culture into the local Muslim society. Alongside, the *Sufi* philosophers and the other religious preachers further influenced the Hindu as well as the Muslim communities and reoriented Islam in Bengal.

¹Sarkar, Jadunath, *Mughal Administration*, Calcutta: M. C. Sarkar and Sons, 1935, p. 6.

²Ibid, p.17.

³Ibid, p. 22.

⁴Roy, Atul Chandra, *History of Bengal (Mughal Period: 1526-1765 A.D.)*, Calcutta: Nababharat Publishers, 1968, p. 461.

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Mughal Harem Ladies and their Administrative Rights

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Abstract

The role of Mughal royal ladies in politics was remarkable which was neglected by some prominent historians. Our male-centric history is written by historians who gave prominence to the male Mughal rulers although the Mughal women contributed to the Mughal Empire. Women were actively participated in harem and court politics. They have many legal rights and decision making powers. Their ideologies impacted rulers greatly and many of them were the 'king makers' who ruled the Mughal world behind the curtains.

Objectives: Through this article, I want to discuss some issues like 1) Role of harem women in the history of Mughals. 2) What were the special rights enjoyed by Mughal royal ladies. 3) Their active role in Mughal politics.

Keyword: Harem women, Farman, Hukm, Nishan, Parwana.

Introduction

In the Mughal India, royal women are found enjoying many legal rights and exceptional powers. They had right to issue many official documents such as *farman*, *hukm*, *nishan*, *parwanas*. According to Ira Mukhoty, most of the women of the Mughal harem were, in fact, not wives at all; they were mothers, like Hamida Banu and Harkha Bai, unmarried sisters, like Jahanara and Roshanara, divorced women, like Khanzada, single daughters, like Zeb-un-Nisa and Zeenat-un-Nisa, aunts like Gulbadan, distant relatives, like Salima Sultan, elderly dependents, etc. They were not sexually available women at all. And yet they had a role to play, a duty to perform and they were respected, and paid, for these crucial jobs.¹ A few women like Maryam Zamani, Nur Jahan, Mumtaz Mahal, Nadira Banu enjoyed exceptional powers in Mughal era.

The Mughal women issued Imperial orders following the same procedure as the actual segments of the Persian *farmans*-(1) The beginning opens with the invocation-the invocation of God. (2) The Intitulatio- the name and title of promulgator. (3) The Aranga- the obligations of the ruler to his subjects and the religious granted by the appropriate Islamic official at any level of government. It was a royal mandate or decree commandments. (4) The Narratio, which explains the circumstances or the previous history of the document's

promulgation. (5) The Dispositio-the intention of the ruler behind for drafting the decree which is the actual legal mandate. (6) Then follow the regulation for the recipient, concluded with an *adhartatio*, whose content specify the responsibilities for all those called upon to execute the disposition. (7) The final segment of the document made by the eschatocal, the declaration of the date and sometimes the declaration of the place of the issue.² It has been noticed that the first two lines of the Mughal *farmans* were always concise and that the royal seal and the *tughra* with their almost exact location on its top (the seal being on the right side of the *tughra*) are its inevitable features. Further, the set phraseology and the arrangement of text, the various endorsements on the reverse with the seals of ministers as also certain signs and symbols should make a *farman* quite distinct from a *nishan* or a *hukm*. Because a *nishan* or *hukm* too have their first two lines in an abbreviated form.³ Also *hukm* stands for the edict of Queen mother, or Queen consort. It was crown with *tughra* or *unwan*. Though the connotation of the term was uncertain because Maham Begum's edict as *farman*,⁴ while Nur Jahan refers to her edicts as a *nishan*. On the other hand, *nishan* denotes an order of a prince or princess or wife of a prince and used *tughra* or *unwan* of the sovereign.⁵

Role of some specific women

Nur Jahan, Hamida Banu Begum, Mariyam-uz-Zamani, Jahanara issued all of the administrative *farman*, *hukm*, *nishan*, *parwana*, because they held the highest rank in Imperial *harem*.⁶ Most of the time, *unwans* were employed in the *hukms* of Queen mothers, while *tughra* figure in the *hukms* of the royal consort as also in the *nishans* of the princesses. *Dogmaa* statement or an interpretation declared as authoritative with the expectation that it should be followed without any question. This type of *farmans* usually declaring under the authority of NurJahan.⁷

The founder of the Mughal Empire Babur's *farmans* seems to have notable characteristics, which were totally differ from other Muslim rule in India. This change was also noticed in the orders of powerful Mughal women. Like the invocations in the *farman Huwal Ghani* used by Babur, Humayun and early period of Akbar, which was replaced by *Huwal Akbar* and *Allahu Akbar*. Maryam Zamani and Nur Jahan continued the last one. On the other hand, Dara Shukoh's consort Nadira Begum employed *Huwal Qadir* and *Bismillah ar rahman ar Rahim* as invocation, while Jahan Ara used *Allahu Akbar* and *Bismillah ar rahman ar Rahim*.⁸ Hamida Banu Begum's *unwan* was *Hukm-i-Hamida Banu Begum*, Maritam Zamani was *Hukm-i-Mariyam Zamani*. Similarly Nur Jahan and Mumtaz Mahal's *tughra* was *Hukm-i-uliyai aliya Mahdi uliya* with their respective names. Nadira Banu Begum's *unwan* was *Nishan-i-Nadira Bano Begum*. Next to Jahan Ara styled her *tughra* as *Nishan-i-uliyai aliya Mahdi uliya Jahan Ara bint i Hazrat Shah Jahan Badshsh Ghazi Sahib Qirani Sani*.⁹ Under the Mughals, all the documents were in Persian, because it was their official language, and mainly in *Shikasta* script.¹⁰

Under the Mughals, the imperial seal was entrusted to the in charge of the queens. Father Monserrate said, during the reign of Akbar, Khvaja Jahan was the in charge of the *muhr-i-muqaddas-i-kalan* (the great royal seal), and the small signet ring (*uzuk*) was deployed to one of the Emperor's queen.¹¹ During the reign of Shah Jahan, the seal was entrusted to Queen Mumtaz Mahal. After the death of Mumtaz Mahal, the seal was given to Begum Saheb means Jahanara.¹² In some exceptional cases, the seal was maintained by reliable noble, like a favour to Mumtaz Mahal, the responsibility was given to her father who held the position of prime minister at that time.¹³ Abul Fazl observed that a separate seal was used in all the matters connected with the female apartments.¹⁴

The *hukm* and *nishans* issued by the Imperial ladies decorated with a beautiful seal, which had peculiar stamp and shape. It contains a legend which includes the name and titles of the owner along with the appellations of her father, husband or son along with the year of engraving the seal as evident. Haminda Banu Begum's shape of the seal was flower with the eight petals and the legend inscribed was Hamida Banu *bint-i-Ali Akbar*. Next Maryam Zamani styled her seal as pitcher and decorated the legend Wali Nimat Begum *walidah-i-Jahangir Badshsh*. Nur Jahan's seal had two style- one followed the legend *Ze mehr i shah i Jahangir shud chun mah furuzan nigin i muhri* Nur Jahn *Badshsh Begum i dauran*, second followed the legend *Allahu Akbar Ze nuri mehr i Jahangir Badshsh i Jahanban* (rose with six petals). Again Mumtaz Mahal and Nadira Banu Begum followed the round simple shape of the seal with a legend *Ze lutfi Haq Mumta Mahal dar alam ba zill i khuda* Shah i Jahan *shud hamdam*, Nadira Banu Begum *hamdam i shahi baland iqbal*. Jahan Ara inscribed the legend *Uliya i aliya Jahan Ara bint i Shah Jahan*. But on the other hand, a type of order like stipulated salary of the begams did not received royal seal.¹⁵

Another type of Mughal document highlighted concerning women for granting them land grants and legal rights. According to *Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri*, Jahangir ordered and appointed Haji Koka (superintendent of the *harem* as *Sadr-anas*)¹⁶ to bring such needy women as were worthy to be presented with land and money.¹⁷ In 15th July, 1611, a *farman* issued that Musammat Alam Khatun was granted 65 *bigha* of land (Jagadishpur in *suba* Bihar) as *madad-i-ma 'ash*. Even widows were given land as seen in the *farman* of Jahangir (dated 21st July, 1621), said Musammat Daulat Bakht (widow of Sheikh Haji), nimat (widow of Hasan Jao), Alam Khatun (widow of Ibrahim) had collectively given 150 *bigha* of land. Also Emperor ordered not to disturb the grant in any way.¹⁸

Sometimes the grant was passed to over to the heirs after his/her death under the ruler's order. Like a *nishan* of Prince Khurram (dated 23rd June 1624) addressed to the officials states that Shaikh Abdus Samad and Shaikh Muhammad were granted 400 *bigha* of land in Rampur and *suba* Bihar as *madad-i-ma 'ash*. After the death of Shaikh Abdus Samad, an order was issued that the said grant should be renewed and given the share of the deceased to Musammat Bibi Sharifa and Bibi Fatima, heirs of Abdus Samad. The grant being rent free and the grantees should not be asked to pay the land revenue or any other tax.¹⁹ Also few of

them refers to the chaste image of the women which reflected from the following: *Sanad i Sadaratul ulliyatul aliya* addressed to the agents of *karoris*, and *jagirdars* of *pargana* Batala, *suba* Lahore informs them that the wife of Shaikh Qutb, a chaste and pious lady has been granted 60 *bigha* of land by virtue of the *farman* as *madad-i-ma 'ash*.²⁰

This *farman* or *hukm* or *nishan* performed several functions (1) Disseminate the messages from the authority to his subjects and he/she controlled the broader empire without his presence. (2) expressed his/her own authority, privilege and their knowledge also. (3) Highlighted diplomatic features and the historical values of the edicts. Like Akbar introduced many types of Hindu customs into the court assemblies. Some Mughal women during that time interfered with it. Akbar's mother Hamida Banu granted permission to Vithal, a Brahmin of the *pargana* of Mahavan in *sarkar* of Agra, to graze his cow freely. Though it was a *hukm*, it has been written in *farman* style.²¹ Another *hukm* of Maryam Zamani, she instituted an enquiry for the misappropriation of the revenues and usurpation of the *jagir* of Mudabbir Beg in the *pargana* of Chaupala in the *sarkar* of Sambhal by Suraj Mal *zamindar* and instructed the officer-in-charge to summon the *riayat*. After investigating into the matter he should ensure that all the arrears were paid to Mudabbir Beg and also ensure that not a single *fulus* or *jital* was appropriated by Suraj Mal.²² Thus she expressed her influence and authority over the Mughal Empire.

Mutamad Khan described about Nur Jahan's *farman*, which visualized her administrative experience, concern towards the welfare of *ri 'aya*, enlarging trading activities etc. She also struck coins in her name.²³ There had a record²⁴ which highlighted *nishans* of Nurjahan to Raja Jai Singh-

- (1) *Nishan* issued in August, 1622 desiring Raja Jai Singh to send money of the lease of Amer per Mohd. Hashim.
- (2) *Nishan* issued in November, 1664 expressing pleasure on his (Raja's) disassociation with Muhabat Khan, desires him now to act according to the wishes of Khan-i-Jahan.
- (3) *Nishan* issued in November, 1625 desiring Raja to act according to the orders conveyed to him through Fidai Khan.
- (4) *Nishan* issued in December, 1625 sending a Khilat per Khwaja Roz Bihan.
- (5) *Nishan* issued in October, 1626 desiring the Raja to report everything to the royal court and not to act against the royal orders.

Conclusion

Also found as many as eight *hukm* and many administrative *farman* in her name. In her short live, Mumtaz Mahal issued one *hukms*, addressed to the *mutasaddis* of *pargana* Erandol, *sarkar* Khandesh and appointed Kanoji as *deshmukh* of the said *pargana* in place of Suryaji. who had taken over that office but as he died, a new *deshmukh* was instructed to adhere to the prescribed regulations of his Majesty to treat the *ri 'aya* and residents of the place in such a way that they may feel satisfied and grateful to him.²⁵ A list of *nishan* of Begam Sahiba

(Jahanara Begam) issued in July, 1640, September, 1651 to Raja Jai Singh assuring him (Raja's) of many royal favours.²⁶ This was one of the ways that the harem ladies carried their weight. Even their attendances were influential, that many persons succeeded in approaching the Emperor through them.

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Hindu Festivities in Mughal Durbar

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Abstract

The enthusiastic participation of the Mughals in Hindu religious festivals reflected the outbreak of the composite culture in Medieval India. Diwali, Dussehra, Holi, Rakshabandhan, Vasant Panchami-all these occasions in Mughal India were framed popular and elite festival as like Muslims festival Eid, Shab-i-Barat, Muharram. On the other side, all these Hindu festivals had their own historical imprints, especially in Mughal age. In this paper, my endeavour is to find the historical background of the festivals in Mughal India and examine how the Mughal Emperors and local communities celebrated it.

Keywords: Te'ahir, Rakshabandhan, Hindola, Dussehra, Diwali, Sivaratri, Mughal India.

Introduction

The Mughal Emperors with being staunch Muslims, but it's worth remembering that they made marital alliances with the families of Hindu rulers-especially the Rajputs. So that many of the Mughal queens and secondary wives of the Emperors were Hindu. They would bring their own religious festivals and traditions into the Mughal's *sura* (women's quarters), and Emperor influenced by this very much. In addition, a large number of people like Emperor's soldiers, servants, and slaves were Hindu. The result was that while festivals such as Eid, Nouroz celebrated with great joy, at the same time Holi, Dussehra, Diwali were not ignore.

Popular Hindu Celebrations

Diwali- Mughals celebrated Diwali with feasts and fireworks (*Jashn-e-Chiraghan* or festival of lights) on the thirteenth day of the month of Kartika (October-November). Actually, it started from Akbar, and AbulFazl who constantly uses the metaphor of divine light, mentions both these festivals (*Shab-i-Barat* and *Diwali*) and their adherence with lights in *Ain-i-Akbari*.¹ In *Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri*, it known as a festival of the Vaishya caste (probably due to their association with Lakshmi puja) and the occasion to meet friends, and pass their time busily in gamblings.² During the time of Diwali, a puja durbar was held and two decorated cow with garlands of cowries were brought in the garden by the Brahmans. Here arranged Govardhana puja in Mughal capital Agra, cattle were washed, ornamented, fed and worshipped. Emperor Akbar took part in this celebration and several adorned cows brought

before him.³ Even Mughal princess and other noblewomen celebrating Diwali in a palace courtyard in the presence of Yogis.⁴ According to Sheikh Ahmed Sirhindi,

“...during the Dewali...the ignorant ones amongst Muslims, particularly the women, perform the ceremonies...They celebrate it like their own Id and send presents to their daughters and sisters...They color their pots...fill them with red rice and send them as presents. They attach much important and weight to this season.”⁵

Dussehra-Vijayadashami or Dussehra introduced by Akbar in the Mughal court on the tenth lunar day of Asoj (September-October). On the morning of Dussehra, Mughal Emperor would hold a durbar at the Red Fort and rewarded the courtiers and citizens. He was weight in gold and silver and distributed amongst the poor.⁶ Abul Fazl observed “On this day they pay particular attention to their horses and decorate them and place green sprouts of barley on their heads, and all workmen venerate their tools, and it is held as a great festival and particularly for the Kshatriyas.”⁷ The small orthodox section of the Muslim community, the Muslims participated in this festival without any inhibition. It was a practice both among Muslims and Hindus that the children made an earthen statue of *taisurai* ten days before the commencement of the Dussehra festival. Then on the Dussehra, everybody took out his particular *taisurai* with kettle drums and flags along with the dancing Mughal boys and girls.⁸ When Mughal capital shifted from Agra to Delhi, Dussehra celebrated on the banks of Yamuna, behind the Red Fort during the reign of Shah Jahan. Ramlila was also an important part of the Dussehra celebration, which is a theatrical enactment of the Ramayana narrating the story of the triumph of good over evil. Another tradition in those days was the distribution of sherbet in earthen cups called *kulhads* to everyone. A big fair held on the banks of the Yamuna.⁹

Rakshabandhan-A popular festival of the Hindus called Rakhi or *dasht* was included in the list of holidays of the Mughal Empire by Akbar. Though Humayun also declared Rakhibandhan-Bhai of the family of Rana of Chittaur and described about the festival of Rakshabandhan in India.¹⁰ AbulFazl said Rakhi was the Hindu festival celebrated by the Brahmins. He wrote “ in the month of sarvana (July-August) purnmasa, the 15th of the light half of the month, this is the greatest festival with the Brahmans throughout the year upon which they fasten the amulet called Rakshabandhan on the right wrist of the principal people. It is a cord of silk and the like, decorated by some with jewels and pearls.”¹¹ Then Badaoni described this tradition adopted by Akbar as a court custom.¹² But Jahangir envisaged Rakhi a ritualized Hindu practice rather than a festival. “Thereis for this caste (Brahmin) as appointed day and that is the last day of the month of savan, the second month of rainy season, they consider it an auspicious day, and the worshippers go on that they to the bank of the rivers and tanks and recite enchantments, breath upon cords and coloured threads; on another day they fasten them on the hands of the rajas and great men of the time and look on them as good Omen. They called this thread Rakhi. That is preservation (Nigahdast).”¹³ Though in Mughal age the historical evidence of Rakhi told two pictures- Firstly in the court

or durbar celebration, and secondly within the elite people of the society. Most of the common people were detached from these festivals.

Shivaratri-The festival of Shivaratri fell on the night of the fourteenth day of phalguna, and both Akbar and Jahangir used to meet and eat with the principal *jogis* on the night.¹⁴ A Mughal painting depicting two women offering puja (with flower, fruit and water) at eight nights.¹⁵ Both Hindu and Muslims celebrated with fire-works and various kinds of amusement, and the more religious-minded people observed with night vigil and constant prayers.

Holi-"Holi is an ancient Hindustani festival which is played by every man and woman irrespective of religion and caste. After coming to India, the Muslims also played Holi with gusto, be it the Badshah or the Faqeer." It was known as Id-e-Gulabi, Aab-e-Pashi (shower of colourful flowers), Mehfil-e-Holi in Mughal India.¹⁶ In Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri, Jahangir wrote "...their day is Holi, which in their belief is the last day of the year. This day falls in the month of Isfandarmudh, when the sun is in Pisces. On the eve of this day, they light fires in all the lanes and streets. When it is daylight, they spray powder on each other's heads and faces for one watch and create an amazing uproar. After that, they wash themselves, put their clothes on, and go to gardens and fields. Since it is an established custom of among the Hindus to burn their dead, the lighting of fires on the last night of the year is a metaphor for burning the old year as though it were a corpse."¹⁷ This Hindu festival fell on the last day of the month of Phalguna and Mughal citizen celebrated continued generally for two or three days. PietraDalle Valla described, "They celebrated very solemnly at the entrance of the spring, with dancing through the street, and casting orange water and red colours in just one upon another, with other festivities of songs and mummeries."¹⁸ According to AbulFazl it was the great festival among the Sudras.¹⁹

Vasant Panchami-Vasant Panchami festival occurred in the month of Magha, Mughal Emperors celebrate it with singing melodious songs, little folk-dances and throwing of coloured powders.

Folk Hindu Celebration: The entry of the Hindu women in Mughal harem led to the celebration of Janmashtami (festival of the birth of Krishna) with great fervor and enthusiasm.²⁰ Before the advent of the Mughal, low castes mostly follower of Krishna cult celebrated Janmashtami. Then from Akbar, it enters in the Mughal *darbar* to achieve oneness with God.²¹ Some hold this festival on the eighth of Sravana, and then they celebrate Ganesha-Chaturchthi also (birthday of Ganesha).²² Even under the Brahmanish influence, Devi Mahatmya (Durga, Chandika, Chamundi, Kali, Vaishnavi, Narayani, Maheswari, Shakti, Gouri, Mahamaya) worshiped and celebrated under the Mughal dominance.²³ Even under the Mughal supervision, the Hindus in all over India, worshiped local deities and followed eclectic culture based on their traditional indigenous religious beliefs. Later on these culture influenced Mughal culture and the liberal minded Mughal Emperors celebrated it as *te 'ahir*.

During the month of Chaitra (March-April), eight occur- Srishtyadi, Nava-ratra (dedicated to the worship of Durga), Sri-Panchami, Asokashtami, Rama-navami, Chaturdasa, Purna-masa, Pariva. Next during Vaisakha (April-May) mostly celebrated *te 'ahir* was Tij (the birthday of Parasurama), in the month of Sravana was Naga-panchami, during Kartika was Pariva or Balirajya (principality of Bali). On this day they deck themselves and cattle and buffaloes.²⁴ A record said "...the wholesome principle of 'give and take' in the cultural life in India continued undisturbed, and Muslims had less prejudice to import silently colourful Hindu customs in birth and to partake of the mirth and joy of gay Holi and Hindola (swinging of the rainy season).²⁵

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